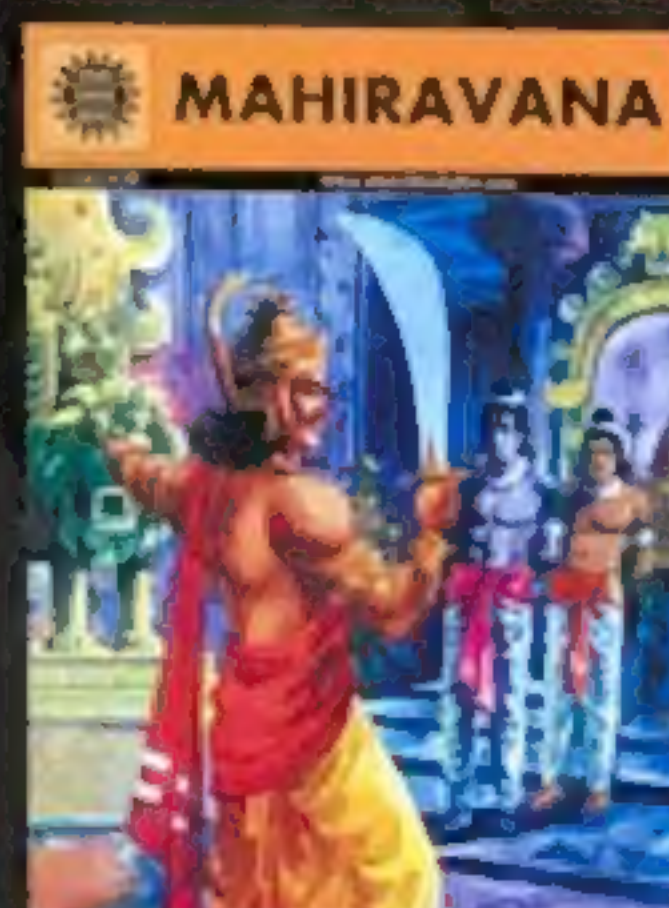


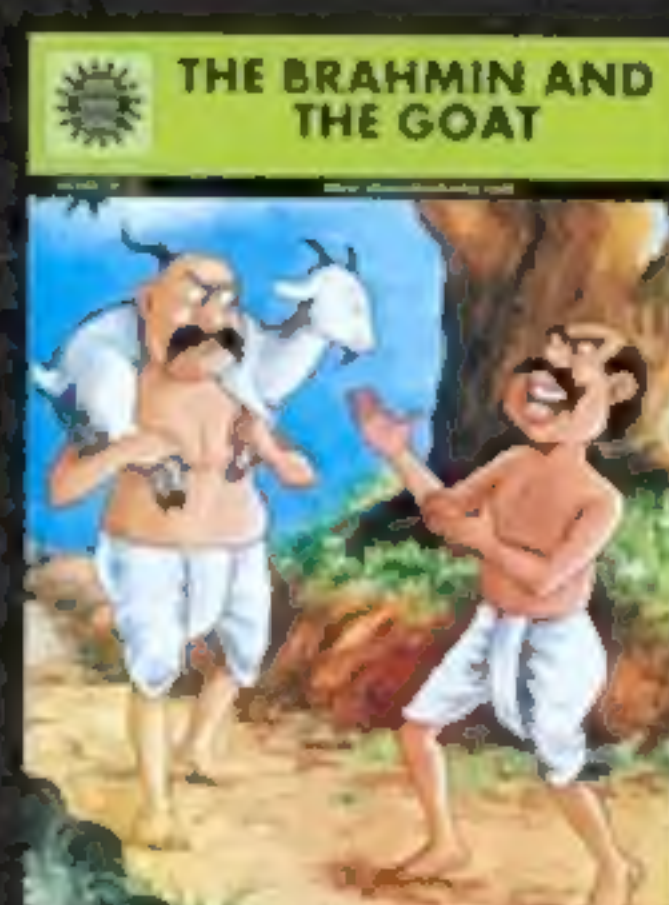
RAVANA HUMBLD

Ravana had soaring ambitions – he thought he could be the lord of the universe. But he was no match for the great destroyer Lord Shiva, or the mighty thousand-armed Kartaveerya Arjuna, or even the monkey king Vali of Kishkindha. These powerful lords were merely amused by Ravana's arrogance, and saw him off with friendly words and a respect he did not deserve.

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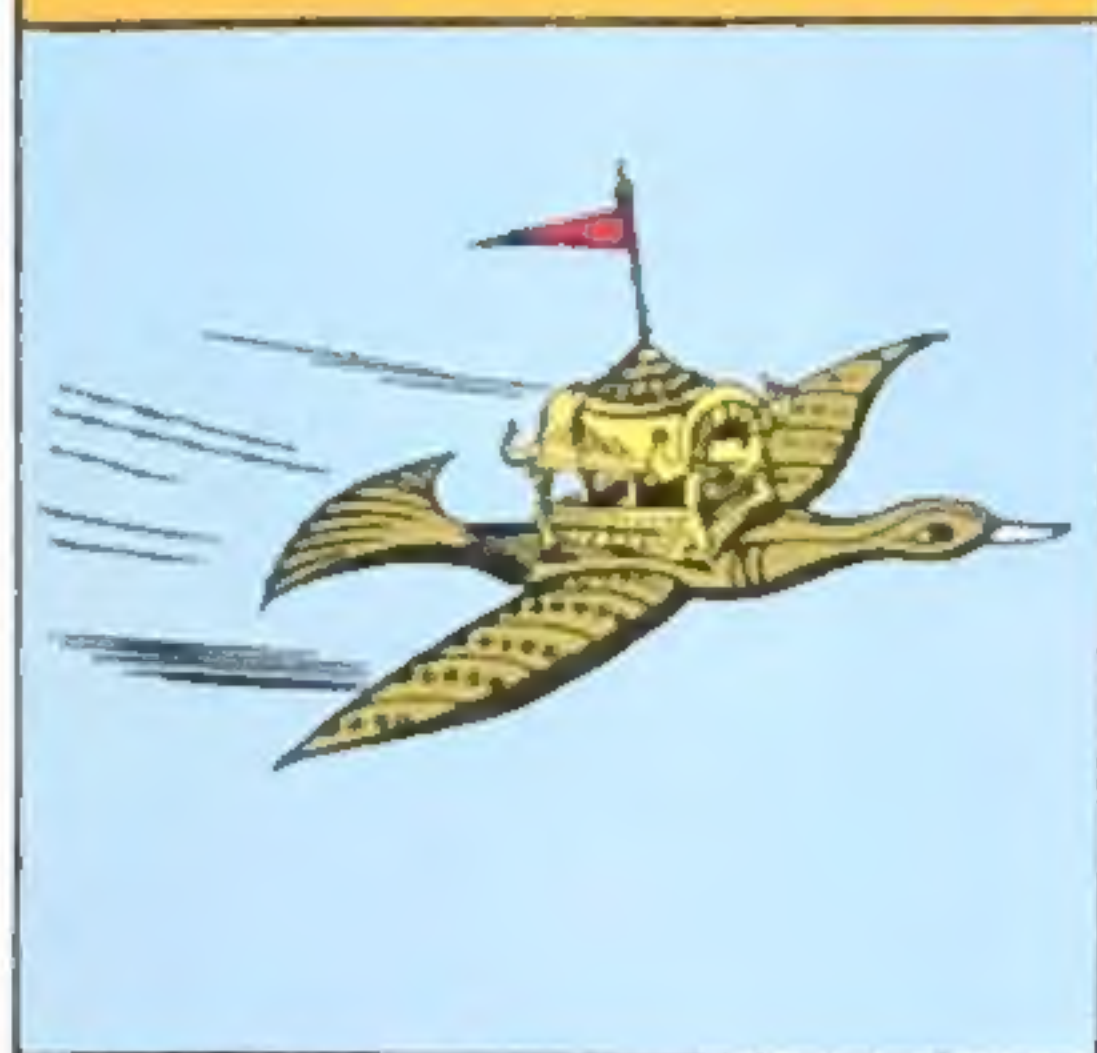


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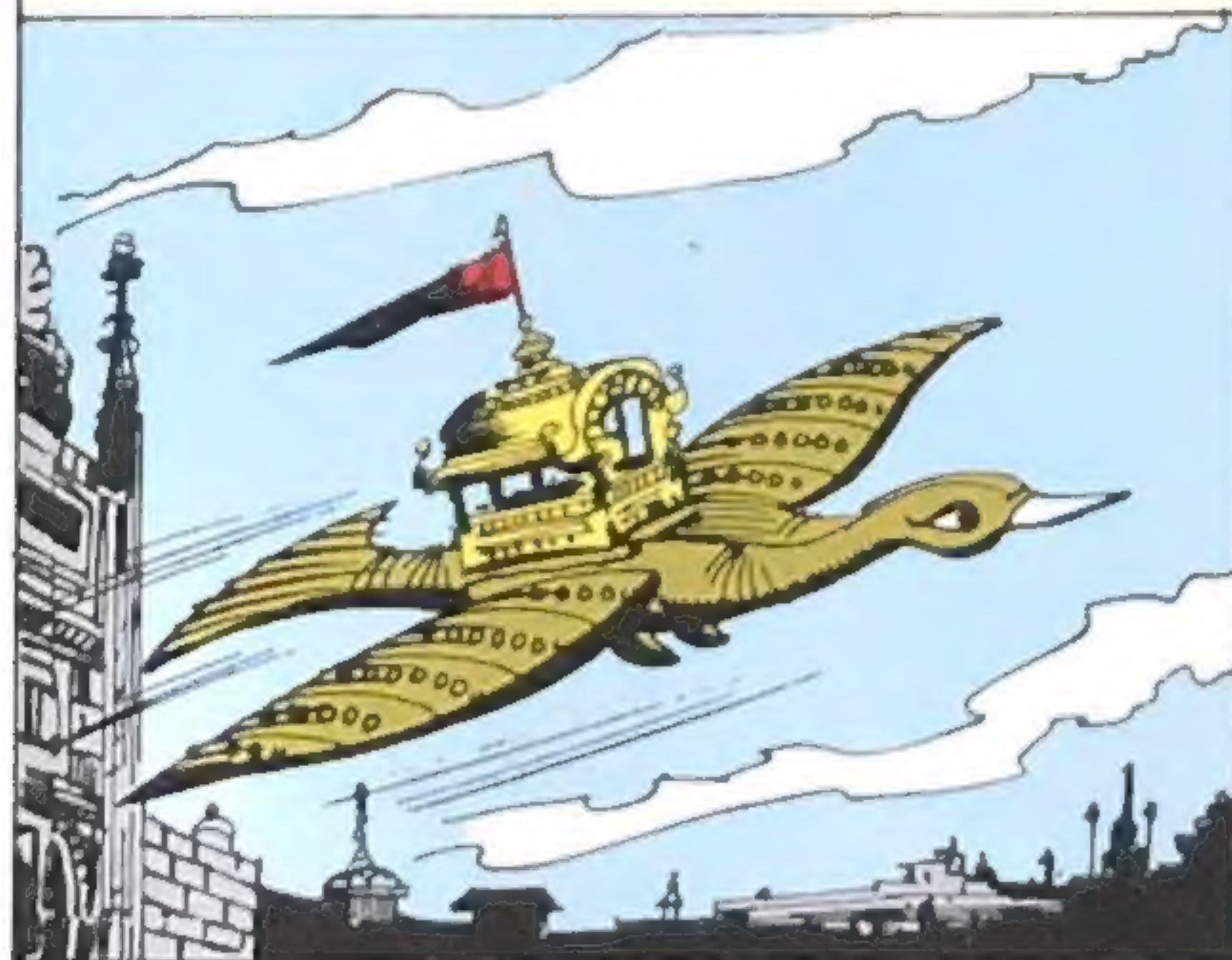
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AT THE FEET OF SHIVA



RAVANA HAD DRIVEN AWAY
HIS STEP-BROTHER, KUBERA,
AND HAD MADE HIMSELF
LORD OF LANKA AND
ALL ITS WEALTH...

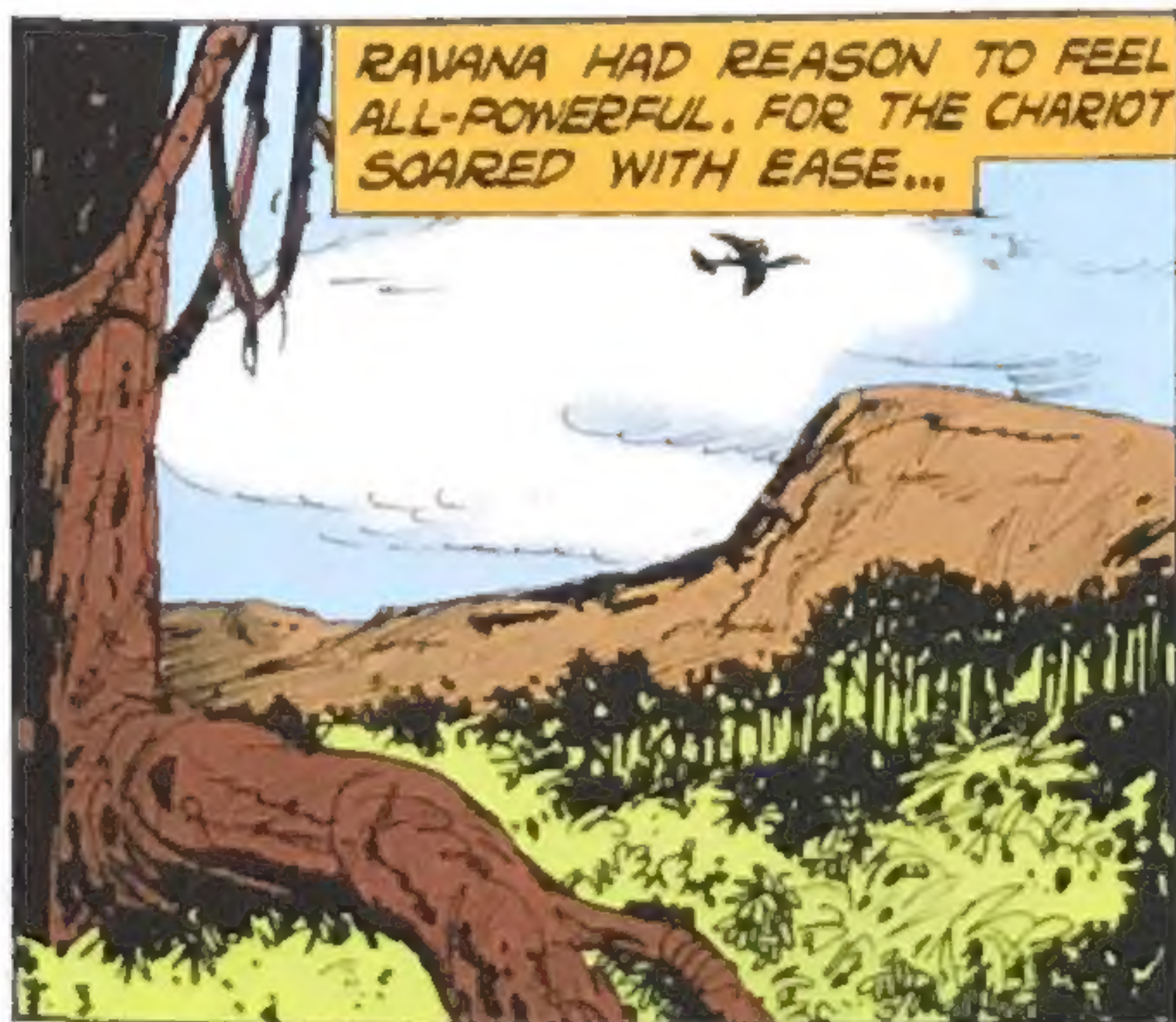
...INCLUDING PUSHPAKA, KUBERA'S
FABULOUS AERIAL CHARIOT, THAT
MOVED AS ITS OWNER WILLED.



NO ONE DARE
CHALLENGE ME
NOW. I AM
LORD OVER
ALL.



RAVANA HAD REASON TO FEEL
ALL-POWERFUL. FOR THE CHARIOT
SOARED WITH EASE...



...OVER HILL AND DALE.



NEITHER THE BROADEST...

...NOR THE TALLEST OF MOUNTAINS
COULD STOP ITS PROGRESS ONCE
RAVANA HAD WILLED IT TO MOVE.

HIGHER!
HIGHER!

FLY OVER
IT!

THE CHARIOT OBEYED
HIS EVERY WISH.

THEN ONE DAY, AS THEY WERE FLYING
TOWARDS MOUNT KAILAS, THE ABODE OF
SHIVA, THE CHARIOT SUDDENLY STOPPED.

TRY AS HE MIGHT, RAVANA COULD
NOT GET IT TO MOVE.

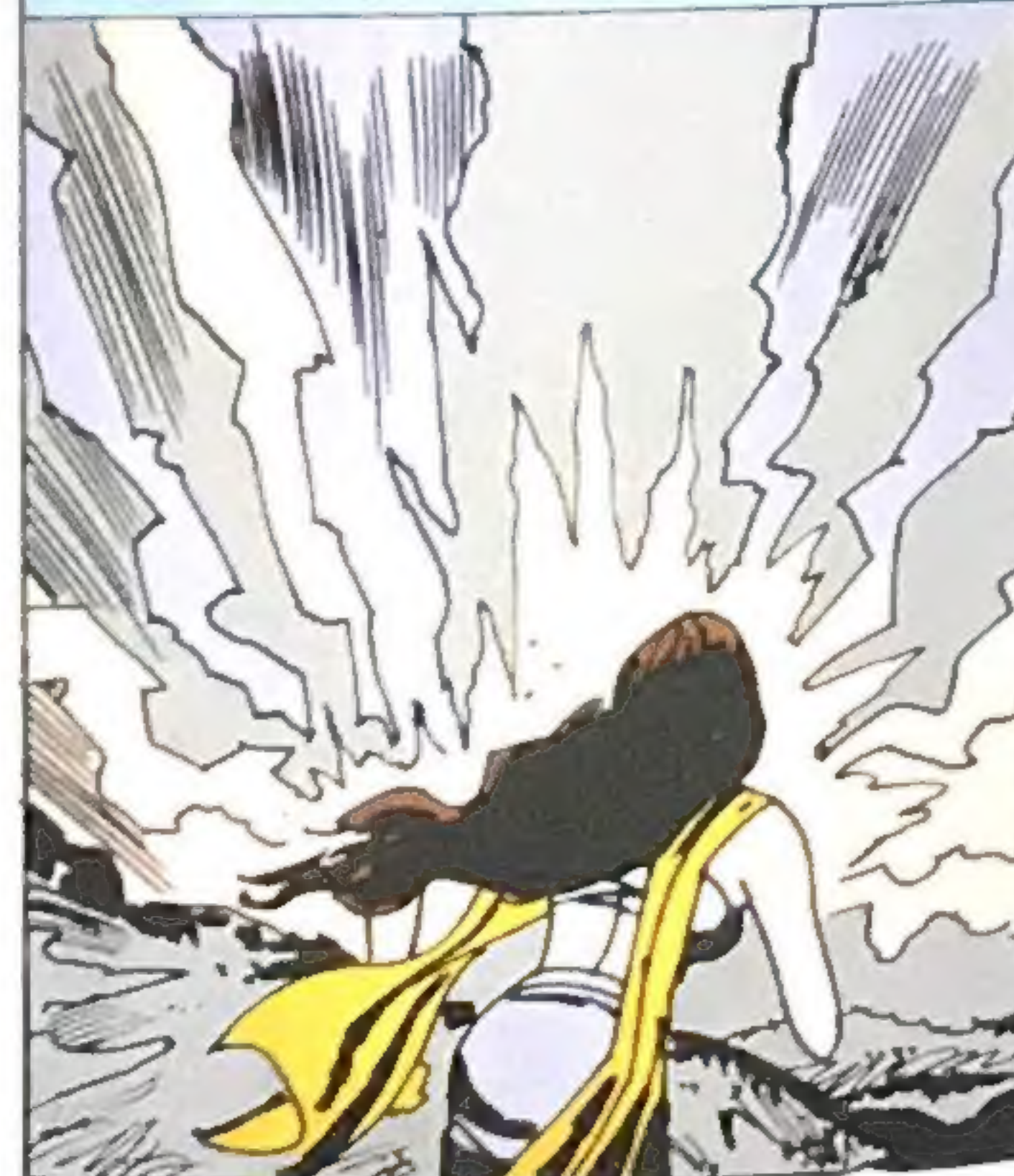
WELL, IF PUSHPAKA
WILL NOT FLY OVER THE
MOUNTAIN, I WILL LIFT
THE MOUNTAIN AND
TOSS IT OUT OF
MY WAY.

WHY DOESN'T PUSHPAKA
OBEY ME? THIS IS SURELY THE
WORK OF SOME BEING ON THE
MOUNTAIN.

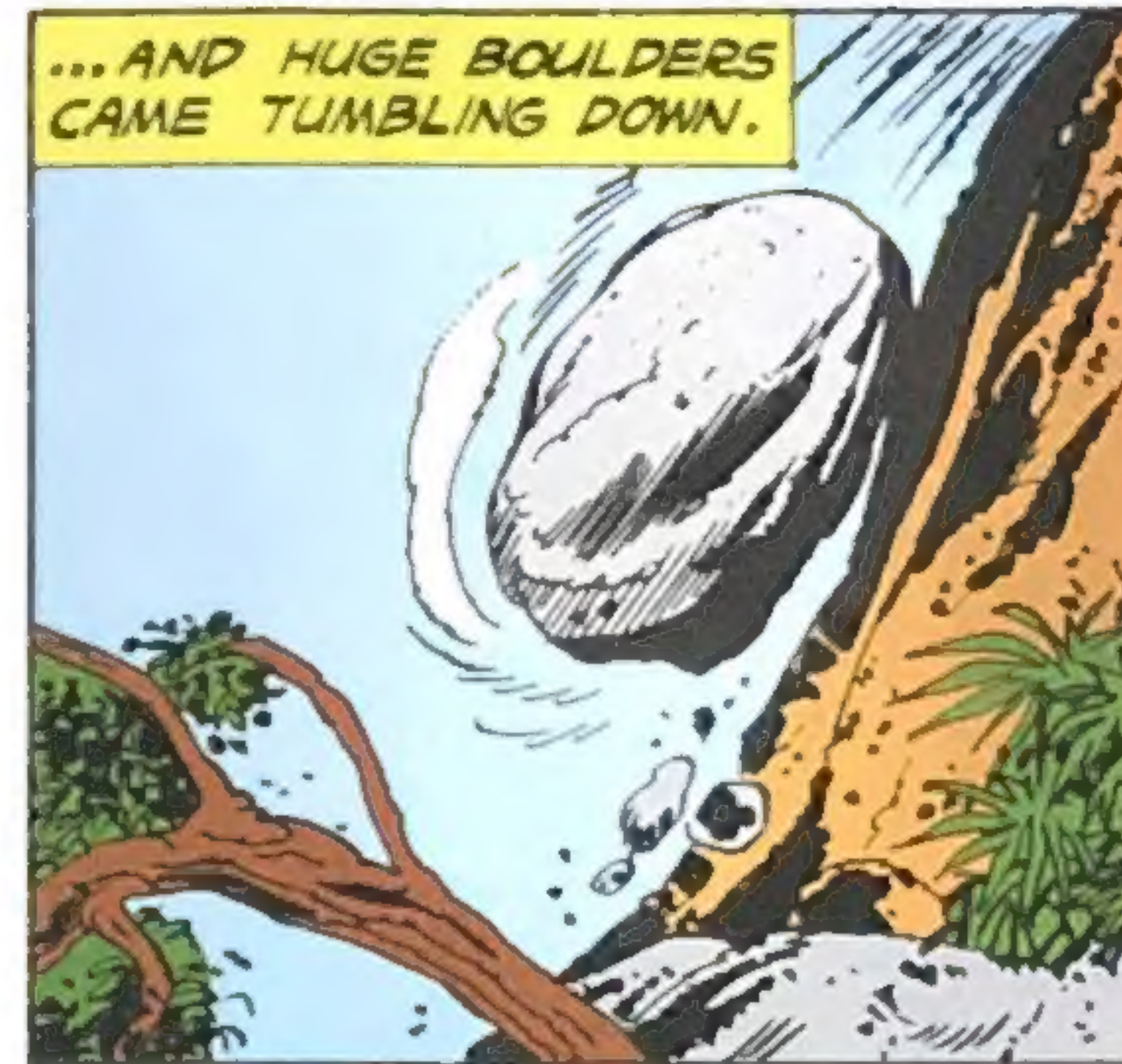
ATOP THE MOUNTAIN, AT THAT MOMENT, PARVATI, WHO HAD JUST HAD A TIFF WITH SHIVA, WAS WALKING AWAY IN A HUFF.



SUDDENLY, THE EARTH SHOOK...



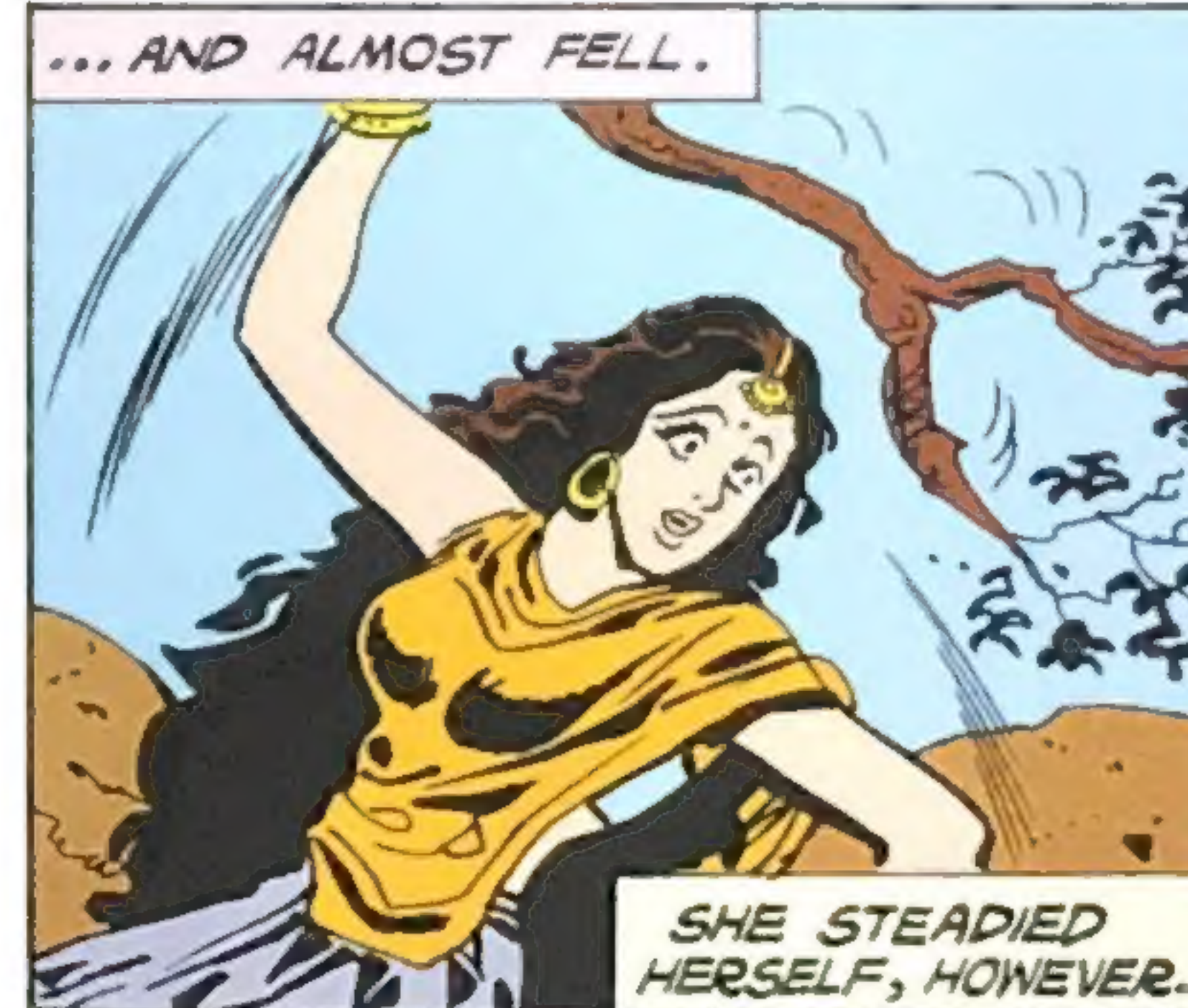
...AND HUGE BOULDERS CAME TUMBLING DOWN.



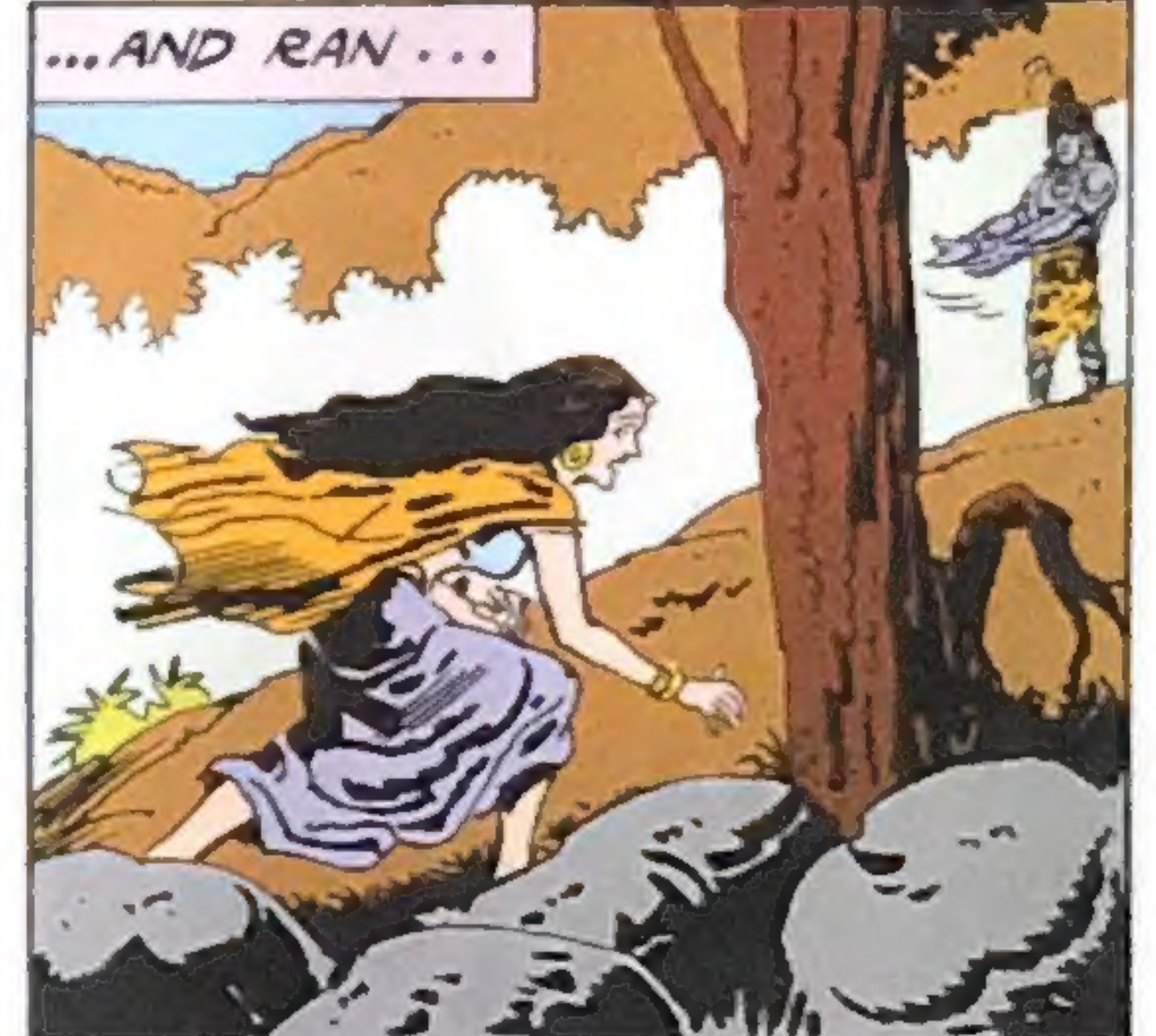
PARVATI LOST HER BALANCE...



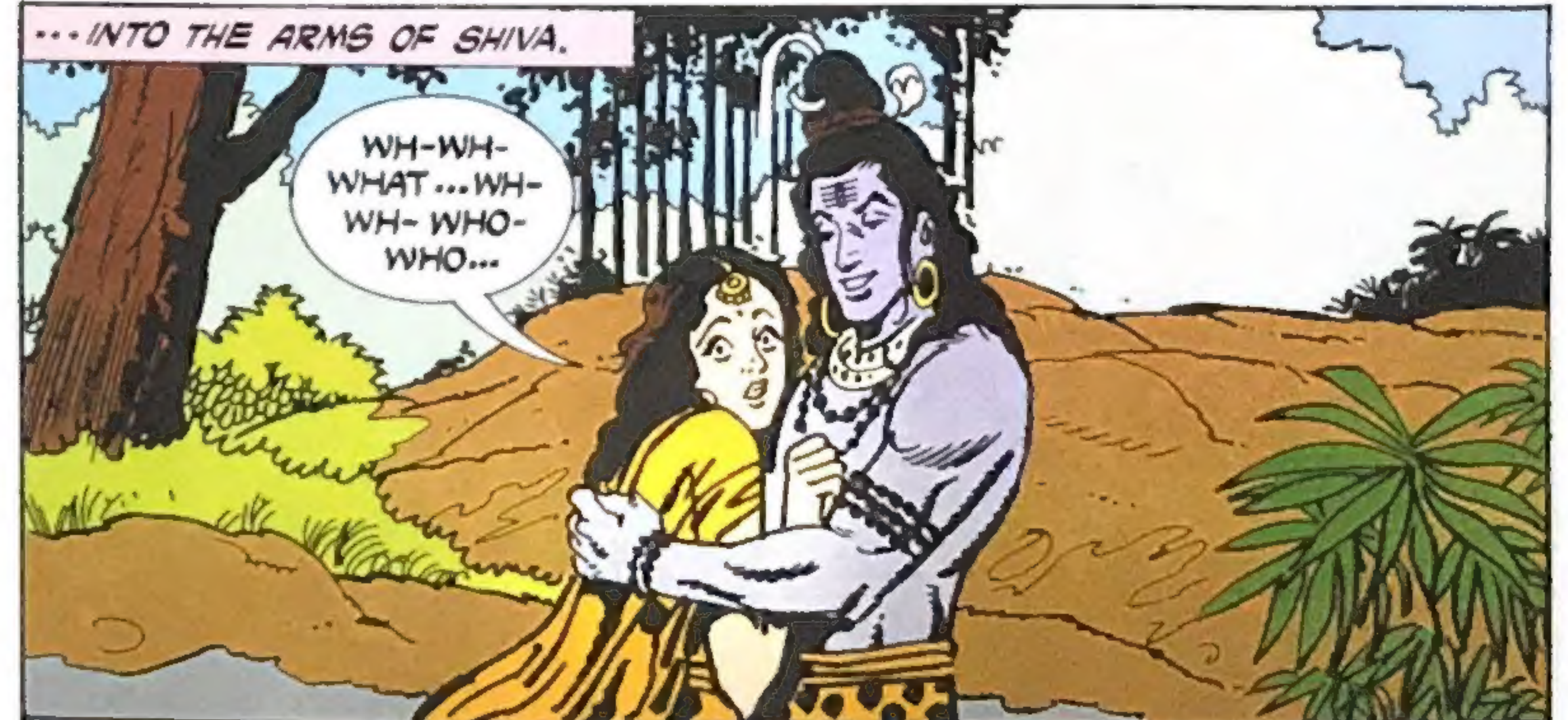
...AND ALMOST FELL.



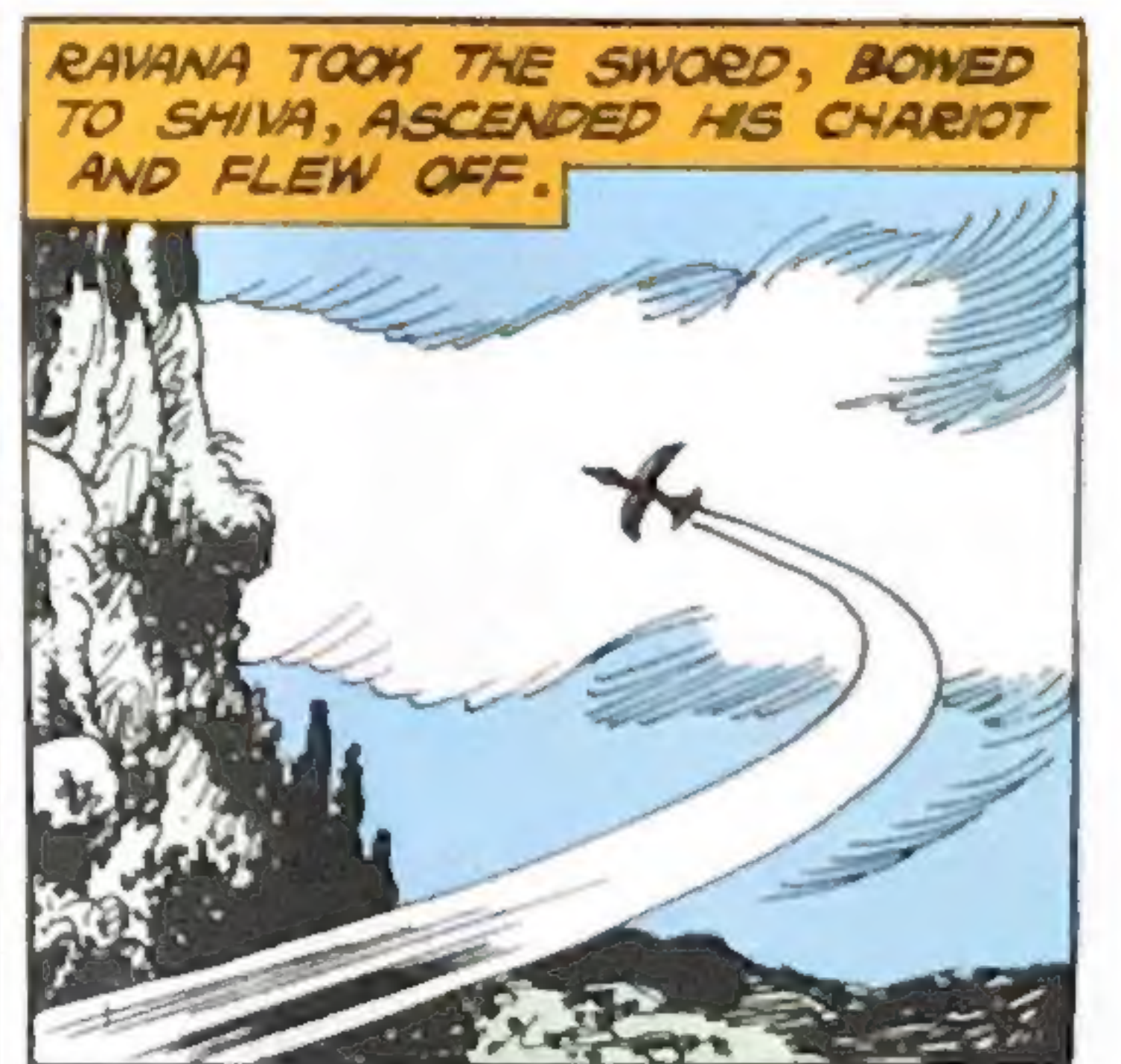
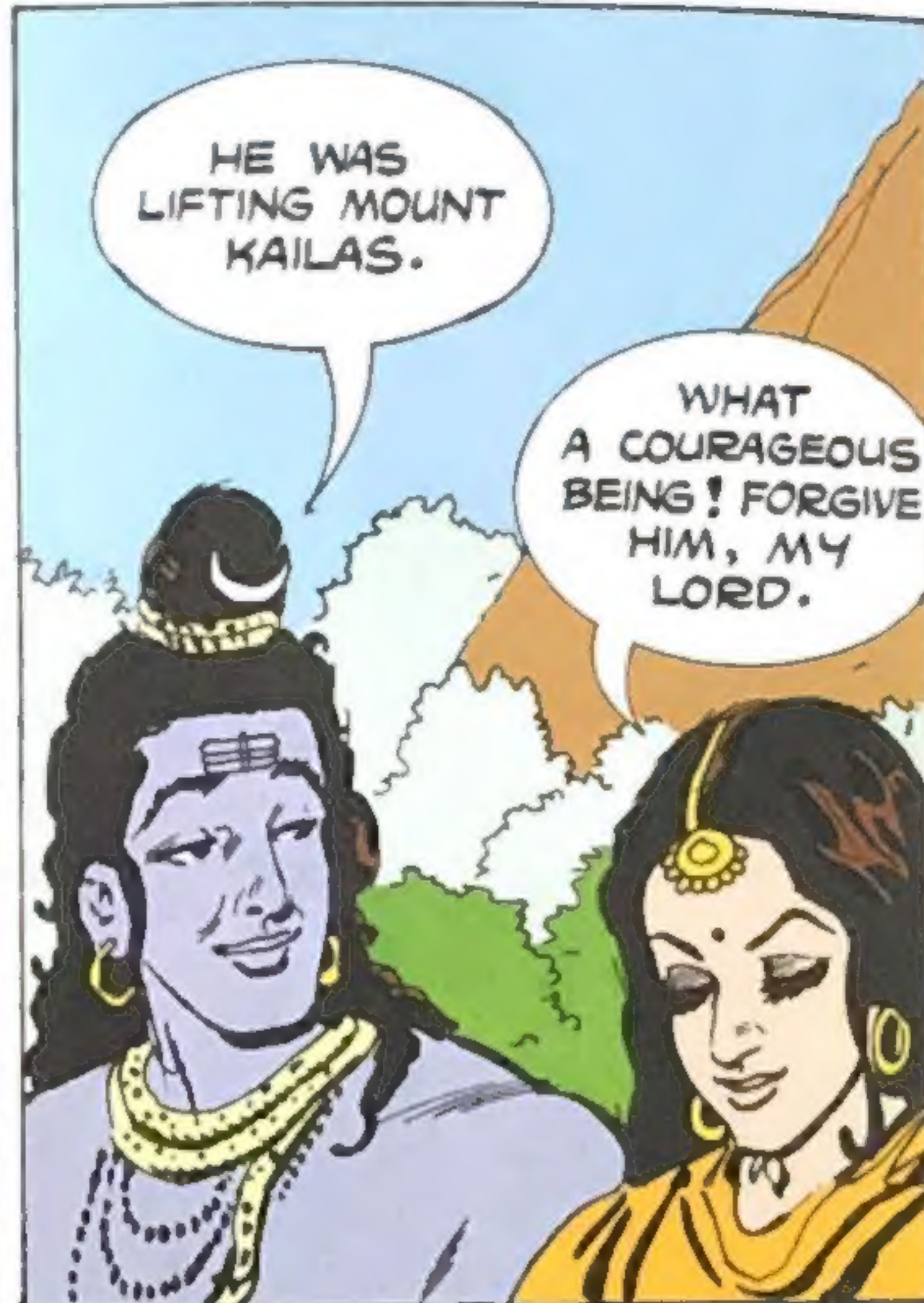
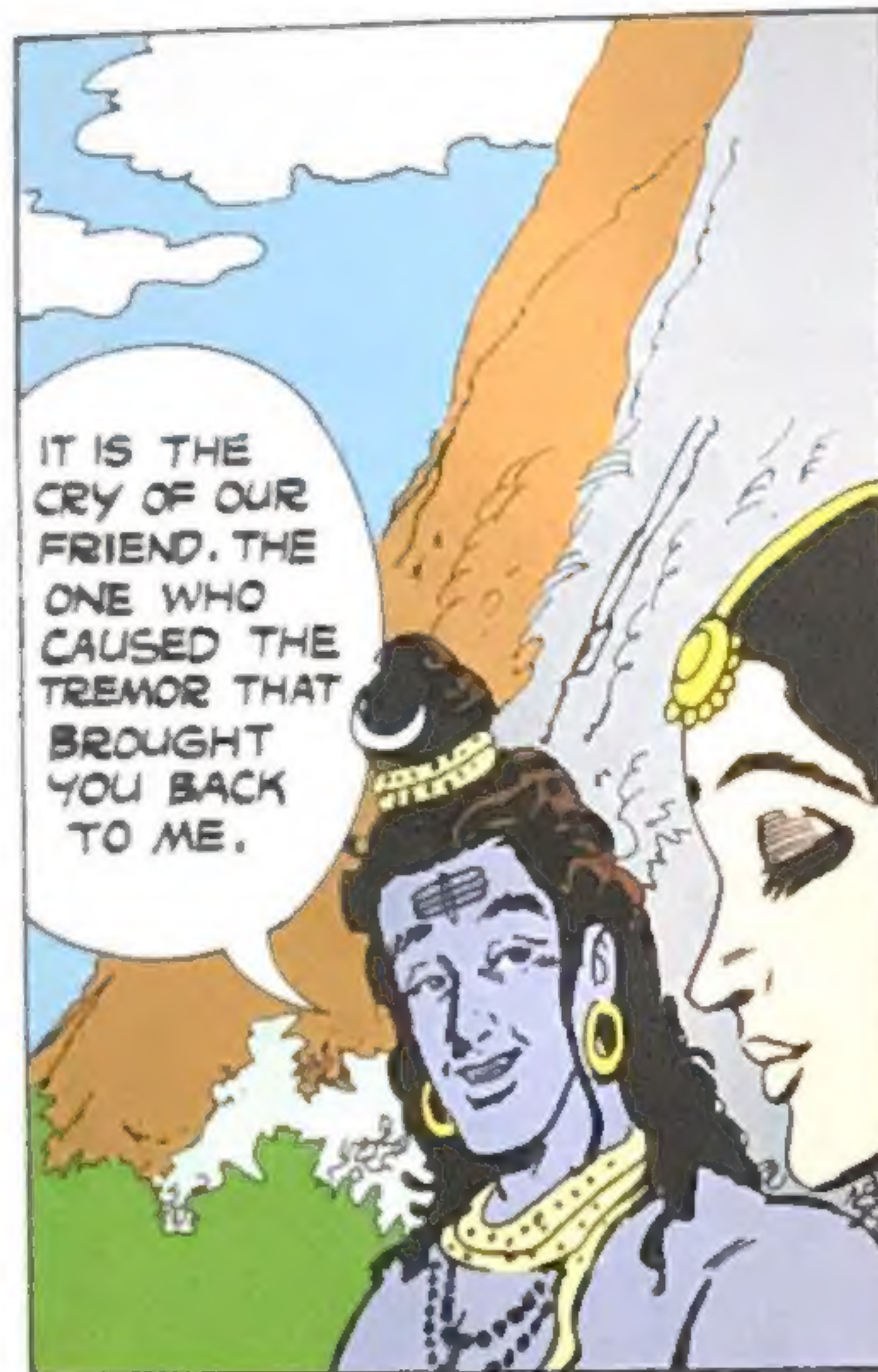
...AND RAN...



...INTO THE ARMS OF SHIVA.



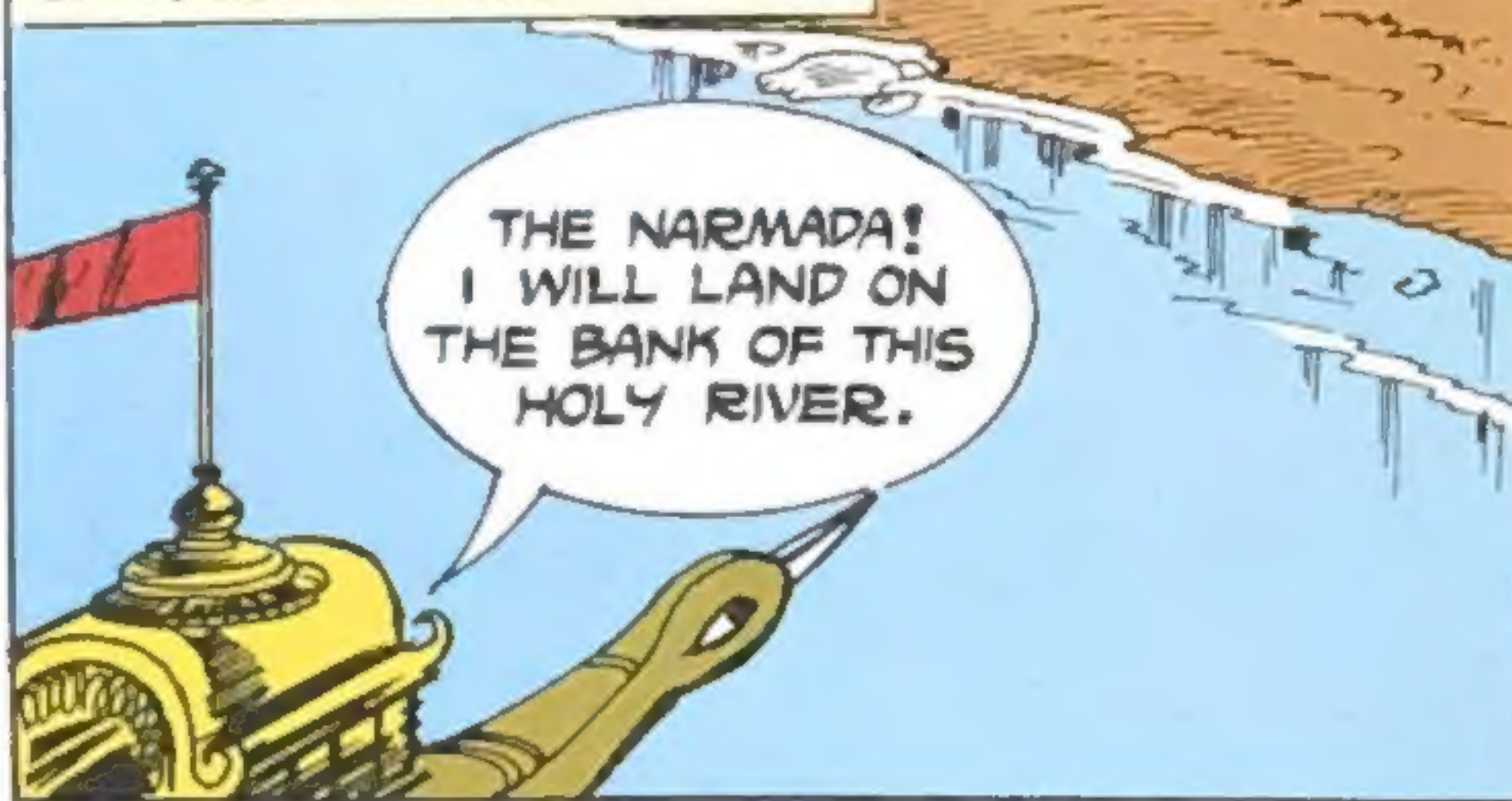




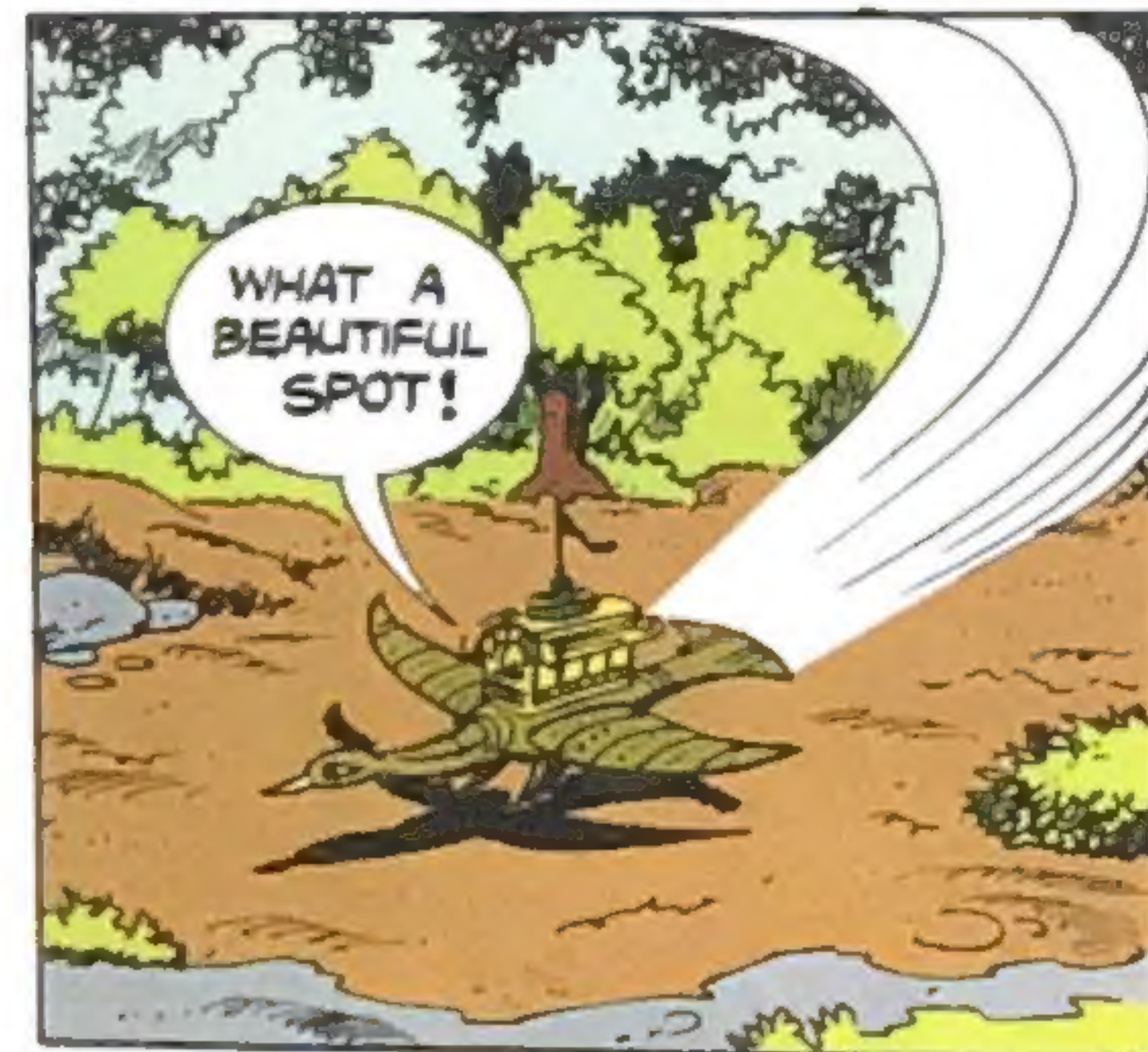
THE MAHISHMATI EPISODE



ONCE AS RAVANA WAS ROAMING AROUND IN PUSHPAKA, WITH A FEW OF HIS MINISTERS, THEY CAME TO MAHISHMATI, THE KINGDOM OF KARTAVEERYA ARJUNA.



THE NARMADA!
I WILL LAND ON
THE BANK OF THIS
HOLY RIVER.



WHAT A
BEAUTIFUL
SPOT!

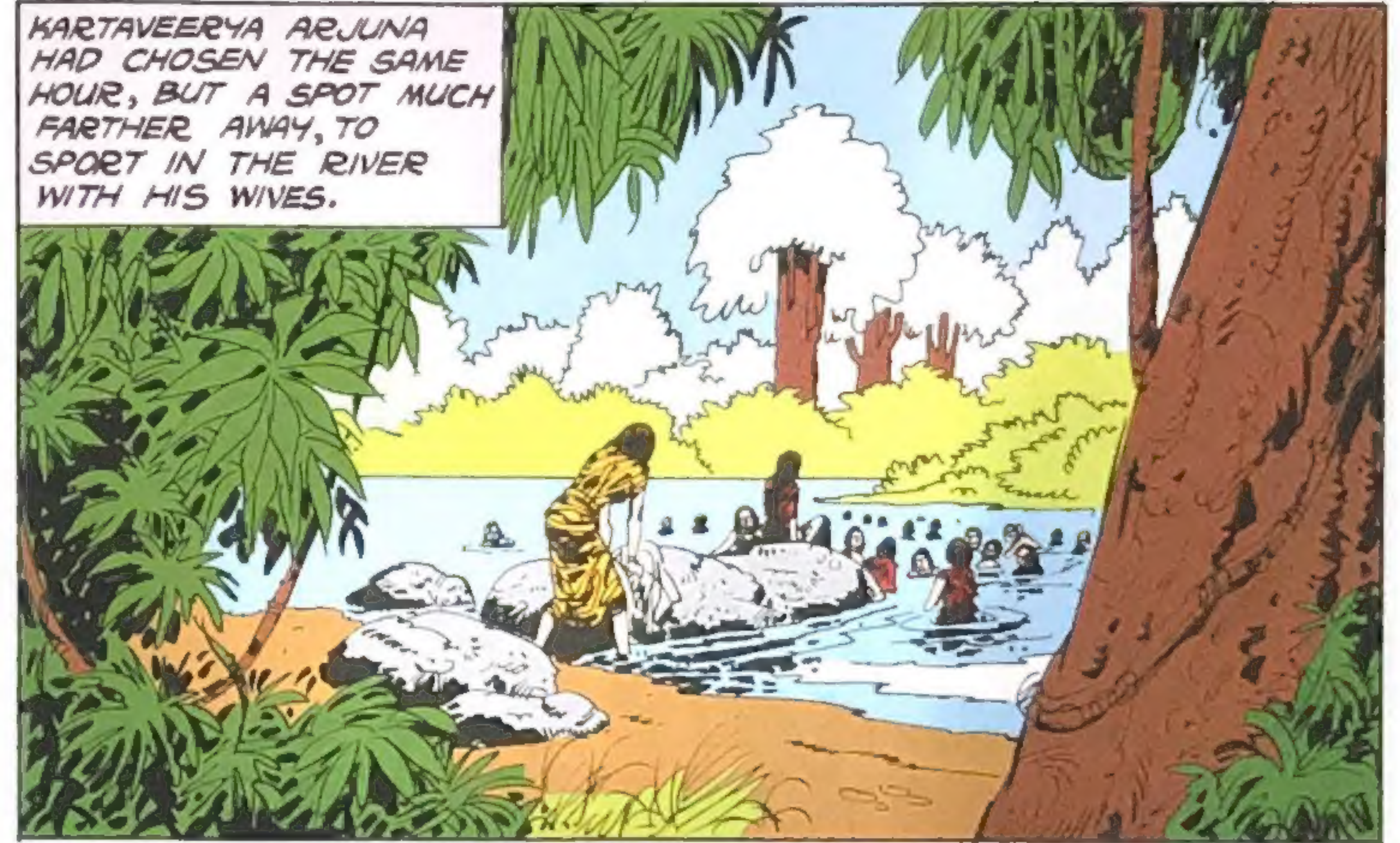


SHALL BATHE IN THE
RIVER AND WORSHIP
SHIVA BEFORE WE
MOVE ON.



SO—

KARTAVEERYA ARJUNA
HAD CHOSEN THE SAME
HOUR, BUT A SPOT MUCH
FARTHER AWAY, TO
SPORT IN THE RIVER
WITH HIS WIVES.



MY LORD, WE
AGREE THAT
YOU ARE VERY
STRONG. BUT CAN
YOU CONTAIN
NARMADA?

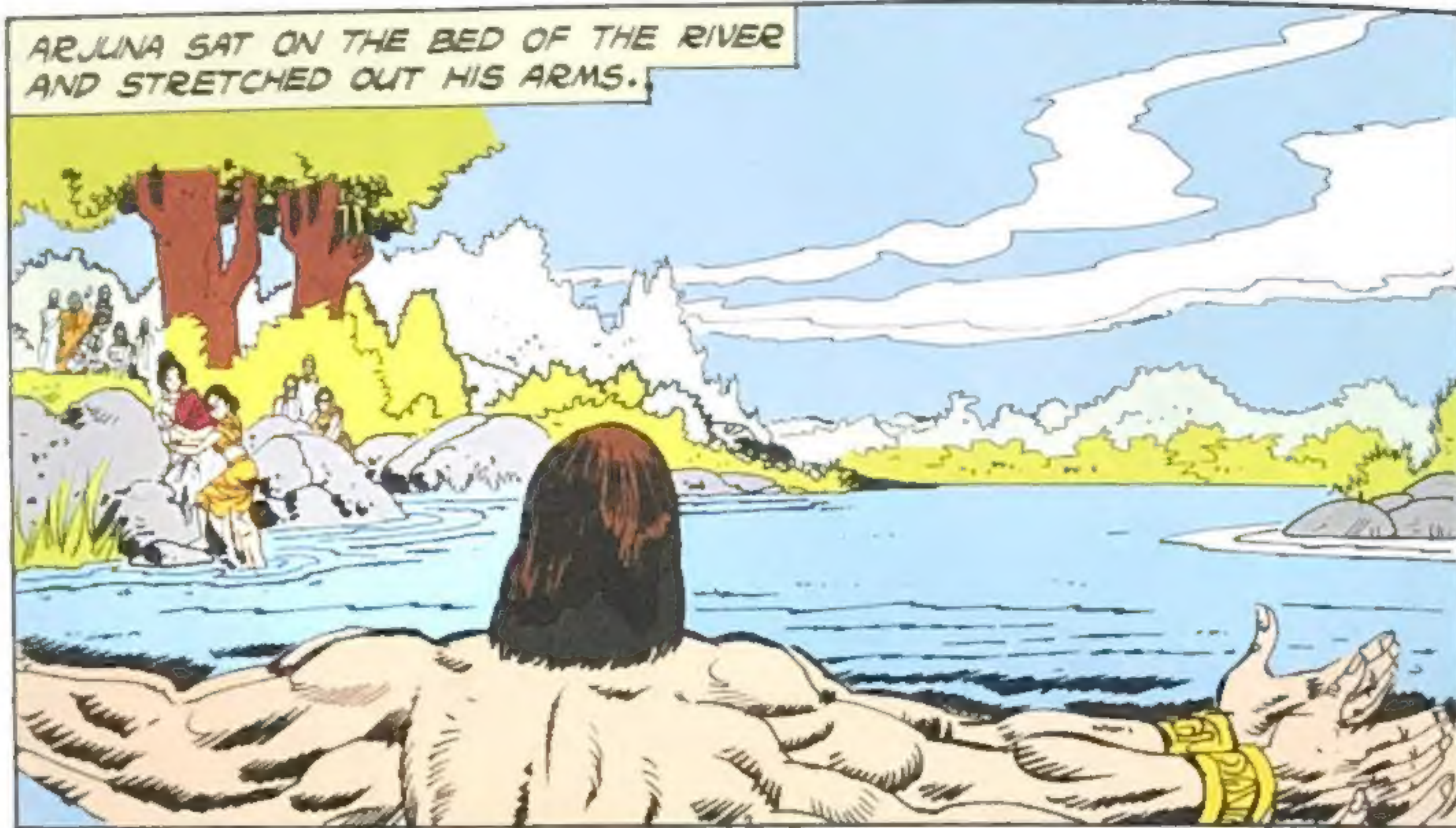
NO ONE
CAN!



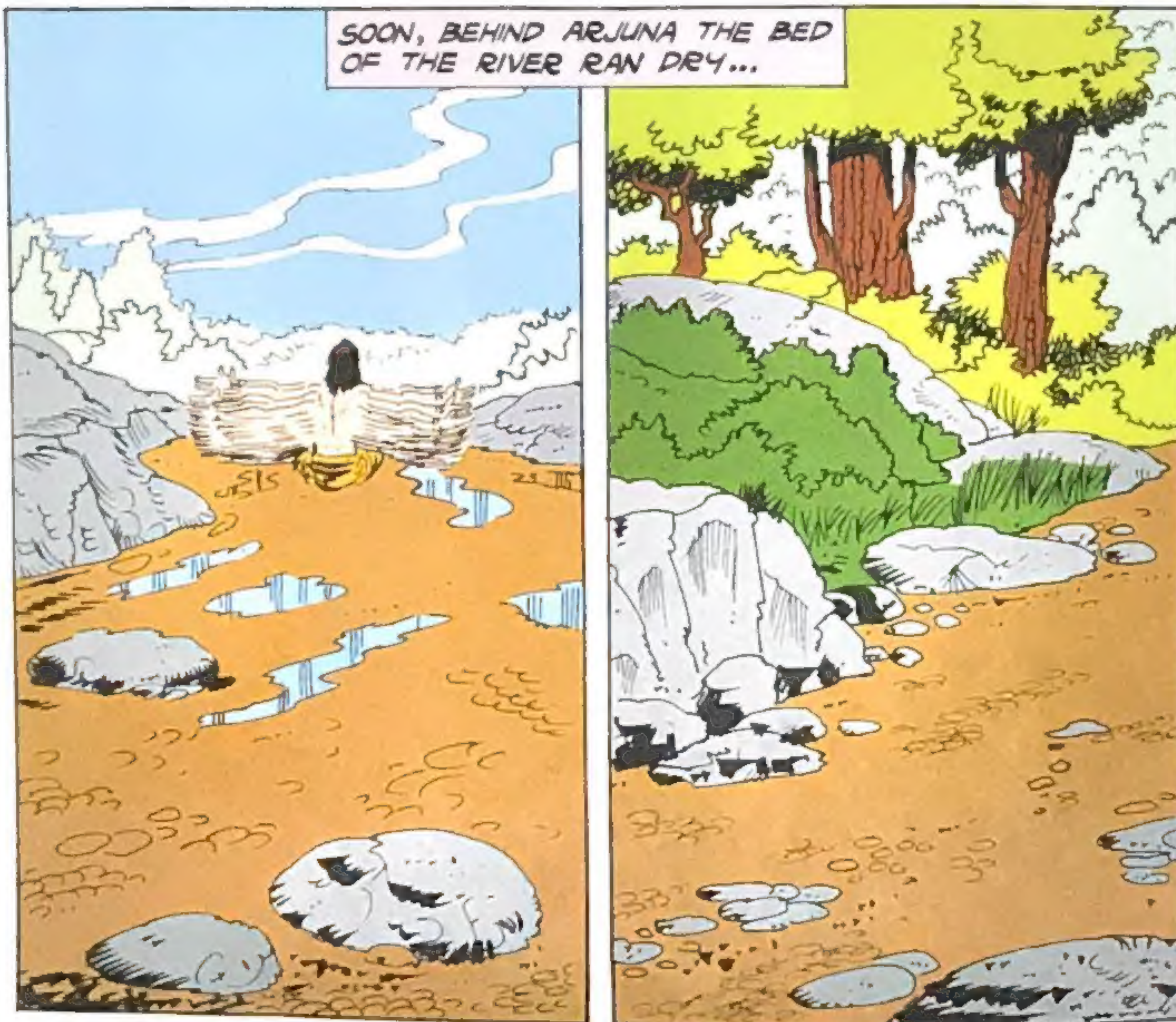
NOT EVEN YOU, THE
THOUSAND-ARMED
ARJUNA.

I'LL TAKE UP THE
CHALLENGE!

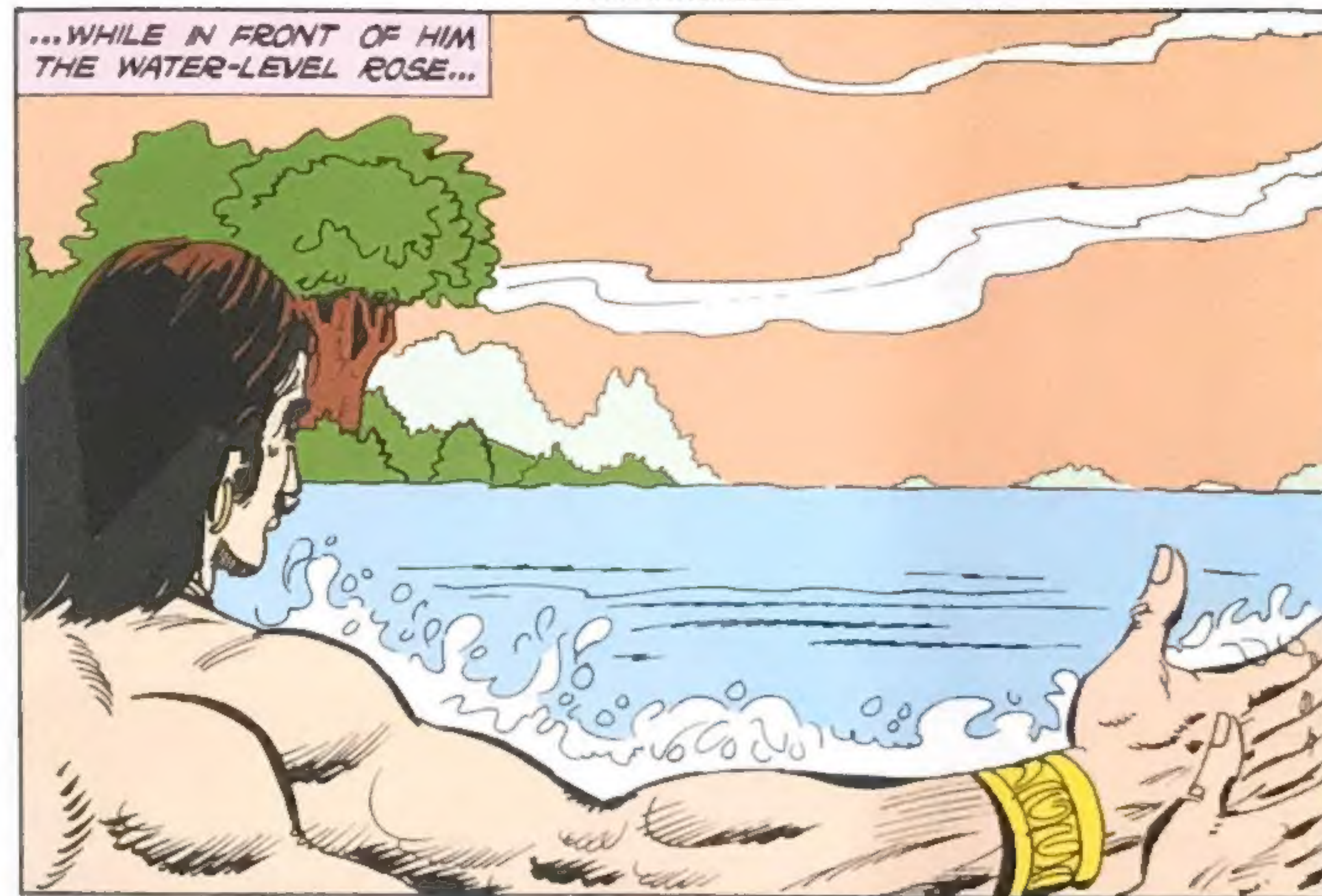
ARJUNA SAT ON THE BED OF THE RIVER AND STRETCHED OUT HIS ARMS.



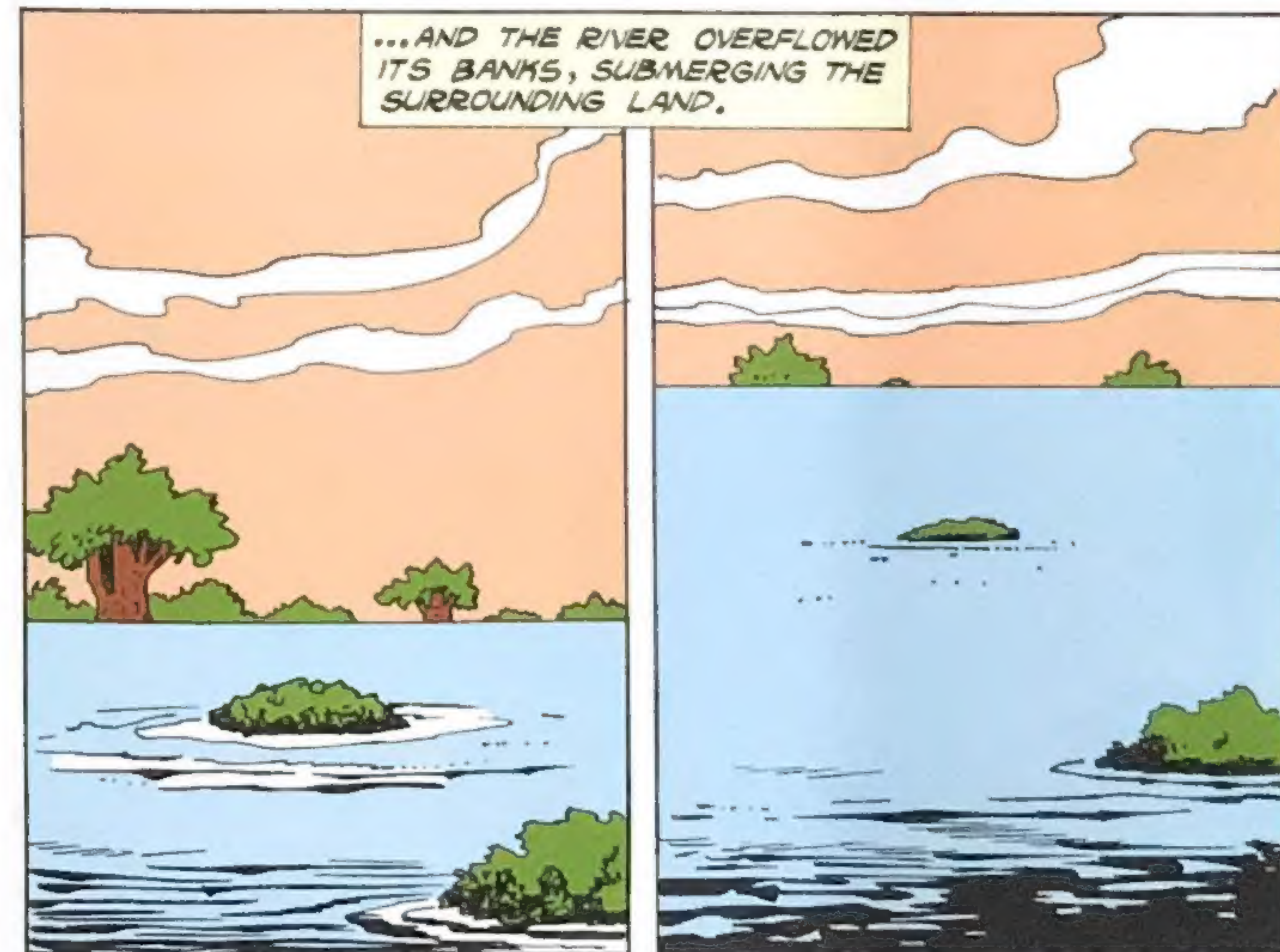
SOON, BEHIND ARJUNA THE BED OF THE RIVER RAN DRY...

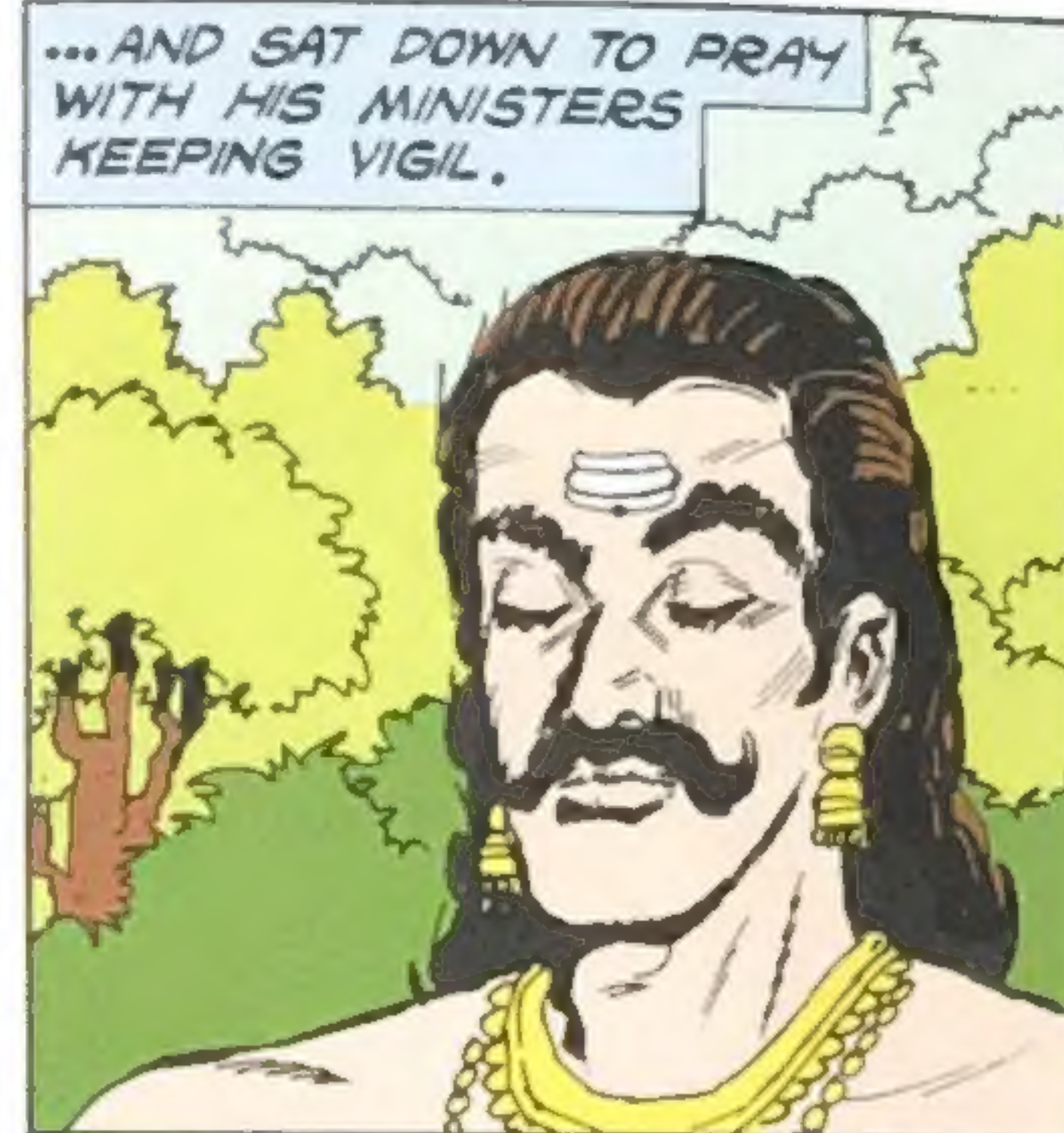
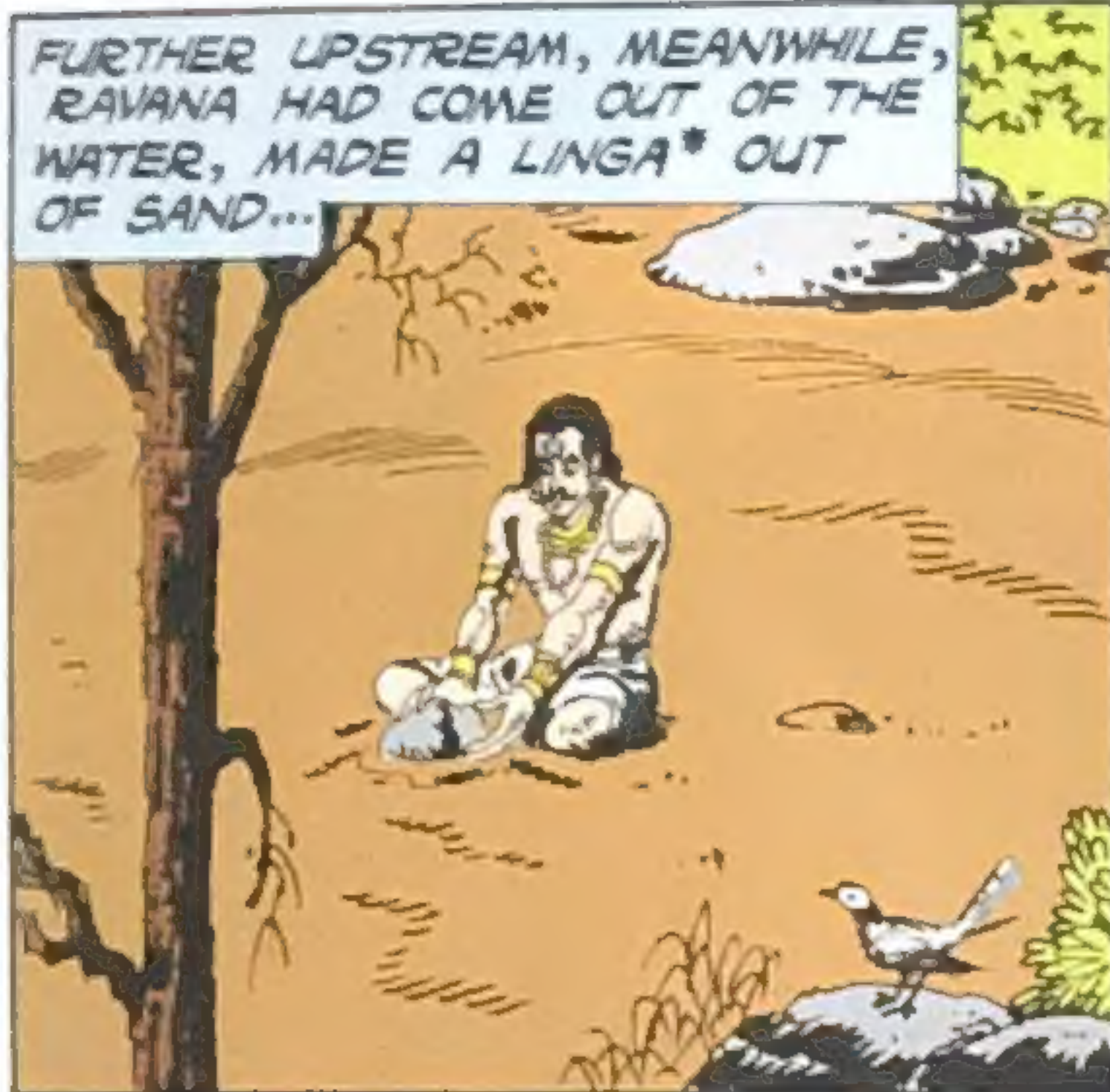


...WHILE IN FRONT OF HIM THE WATER-LEVEL ROSE...



...AND THE RIVER OVERFLOWED ITS BANKS, SUBMERGING THE SURROUNDING LAND.





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RAVANA THE MIGHTY

Script: Swarn Khandpur
Illustrated by: S.K. Parab



RAVANA, THE RAKSHASA KING OF LANKA, WAS A MIGHTY BEING. HIS STRENGTH WAS SO GREAT THAT HE COULD AGITATE THE SEAS AND SPLIT THE PEAKS OF MOUNTAINS.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF LANKA, RAMA WHO WAS SEEING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME, EXCLAIMED, "AH! WHAT GLORY, WHAT EXCEEDING MAJESTY IS RAVANA'S! AS ONE CANNOT GAZE ON THE SUN, NEITHER CAN THE EYE REST ON HIM. SUCH IS THE BLINDING POWER OF HIS MAGNIFICENCE! NEITHER DEVAS, DANAVAS NOR HEROES POSSESS A BODY EQUAL TO HIS!"

RAMA AND RAVANA WERE SKILLED WARRIORS AND BOTH BROUGHT EXCEPTIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE SCIENCE OF ARMS TO THE FIGHT. WATCHING THE DREADFUL COMBAT BETWEEN THE TWO, THE DEVAS, THE GANDHARVAS, THE RISHIS, THE DANAVAS AND THE DAITYAS CRIED OUT, "AS THE SKY IS COMPARABLE ONLY WITH THE SKY AND THE OCEAN ONLY WITH THE OCEAN, SO IS THIS FIGHT BETWEEN RAMA AND RAVANA!"

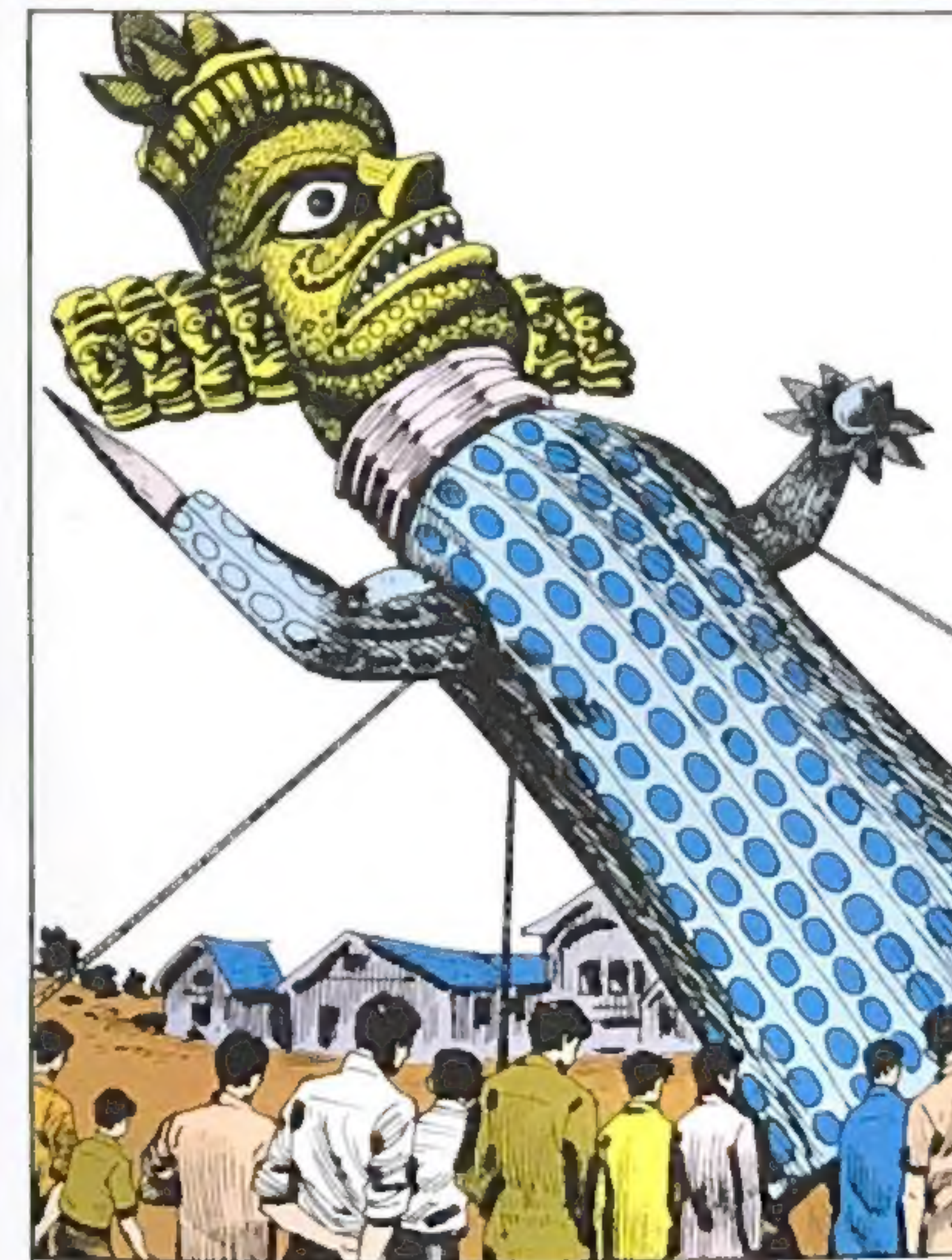
RAMA'S VICTORY OVER RAVANA IS COMMEMORATED IN THE NORTH DURING THE FESTIVAL OF DUSSEHRA. FOR NINE DAYS RAMLILA IS ENACTED AND ON THE TENTH DAY, DUSSEHRA WHICH MARKS THE DAY OF VICTORY, AN EFFIGY OF RAVANA IS BURNT.



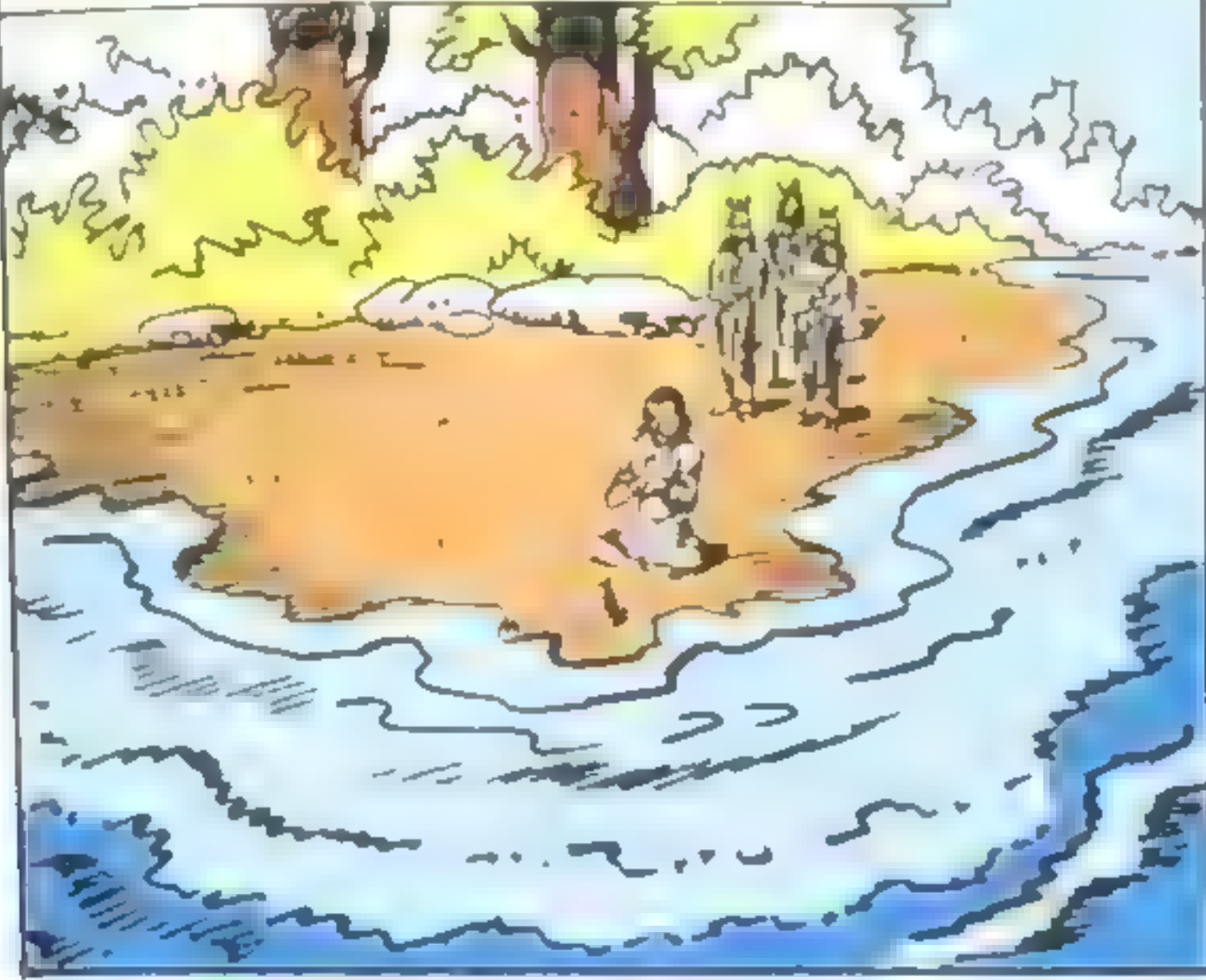
THE HUGE EFFIGY IS ERECTED ON A MIGHTY FRAMEWORK OF BAMBOOS. IT IS THEN FILLED WITH FIRE-CRACKERS AND COVERED ON THE OUTSIDE WITH COLOURED PAPERS.

ALTHOUGH RAVANA IS DESCRIBED IN THE RAMAYANA AS HAVING TEN HEADS, IN FOLK ART HE IS OFTEN SHOWN WITH ONLY NINE.

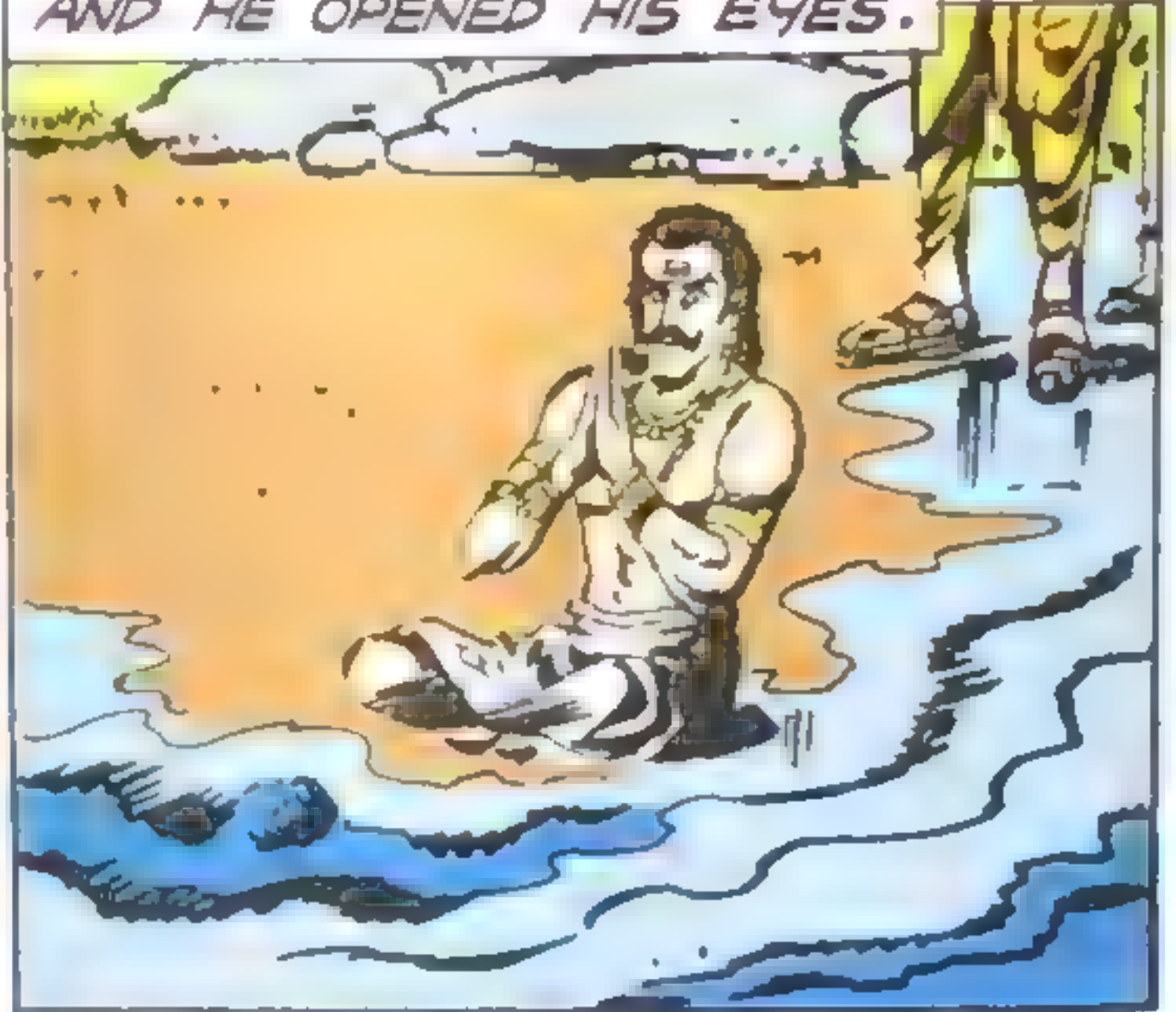
ON DUSSEHRA DAY, WHEN THE EFFIGY CATCHES FIRE, IT BLAZES IN FIERY SPLENDOUR TILL THE MIGHTY RAVANA FALLS.



THE MINISTERS WATCHED
HELPLESSLY AS THE WATER
GRADUALLY NEARED RAVANA.



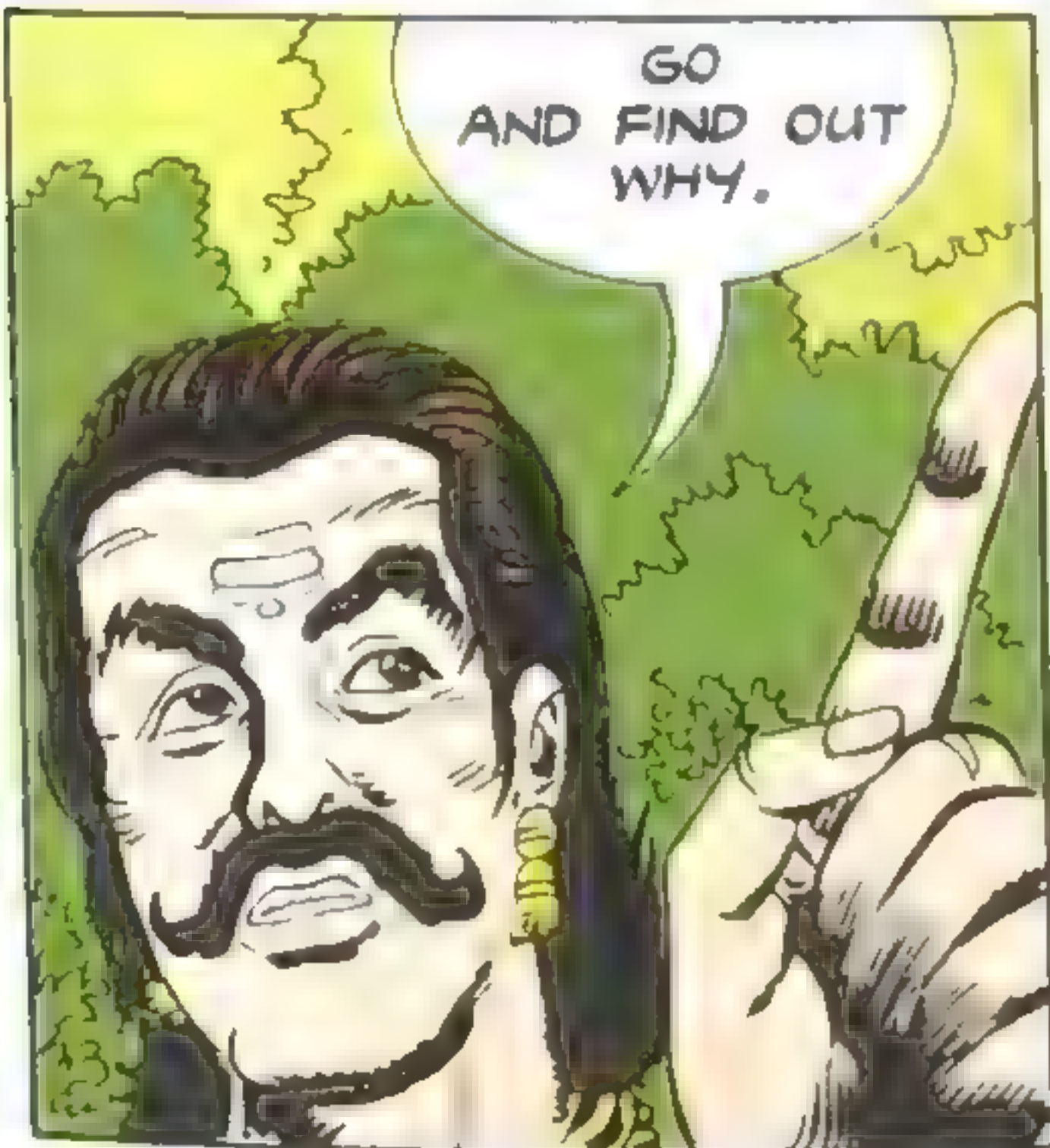
AS IT BEGAN TO WASH AWAY THE
LINGA, RAVANA'S PRAYERS ENDED
AND HE OPENED HIS EYES.



THE RIVER SEEMS
TO BE IN FLOOD,
MASTER.



GO
AND FIND OUT
WHY.

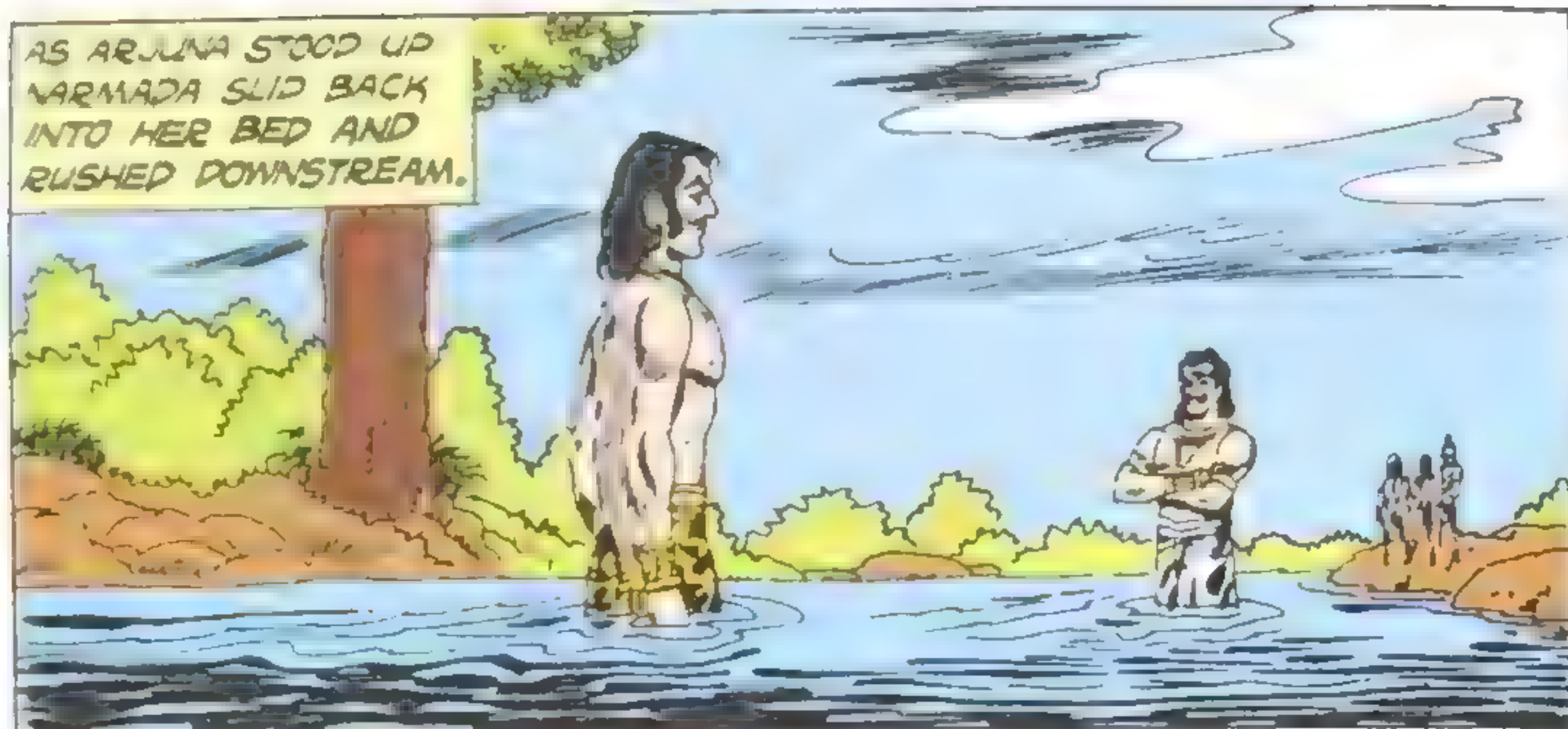


SOON, THE MINISTER WAS BACK.

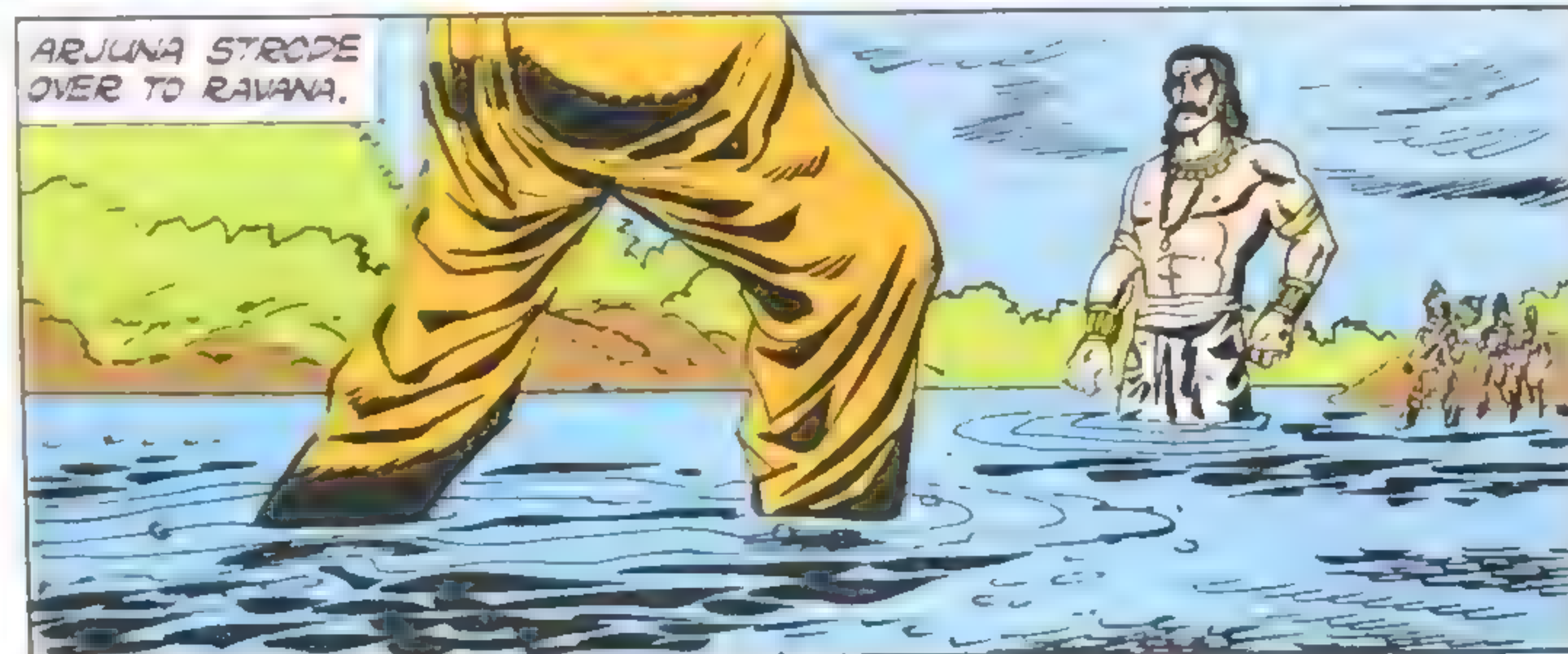


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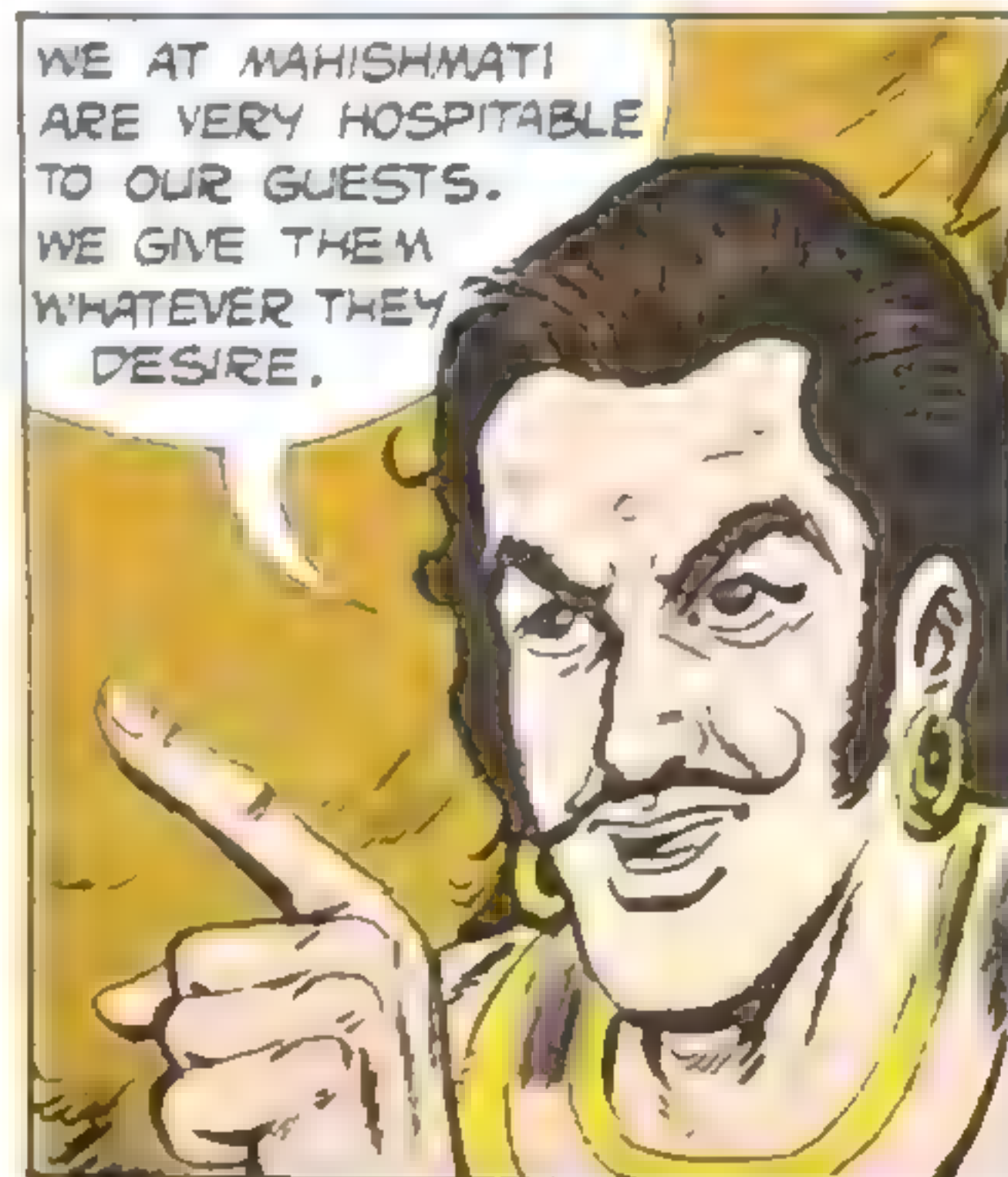




AS ARJUNA STOOD UP NARMADA SLID BACK INTO HER BED AND RUSHED DOWNSTREAM.



ARJUNA STRODE OVER TO RAVANA.



WE AT MAHISHMATI ARE VERY HOSPITABLE TO OUR GUESTS. WE GIVE THEM WHATEVER THEY DESIRE.



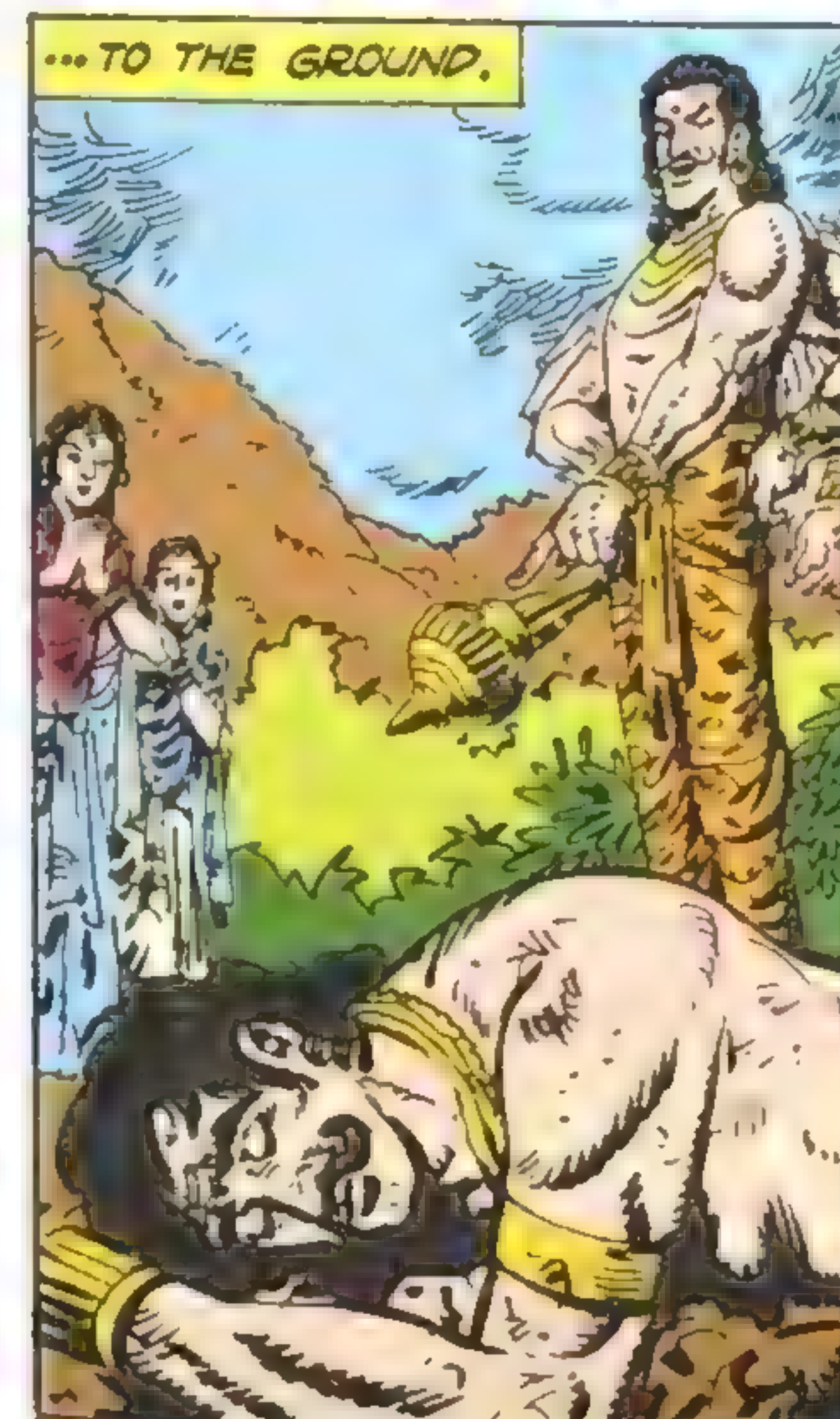
SO I WILL GIVE YOU THE BATTLE YOU CRAVE.



THE WEAPON THEY CHOSE WAS THE MACE. THE TWO MIGHTY KINGS FOUGHT LONG AND HARD.



AT LAST A BLOW FROM ARJUNA SENT RAVANA REELING...

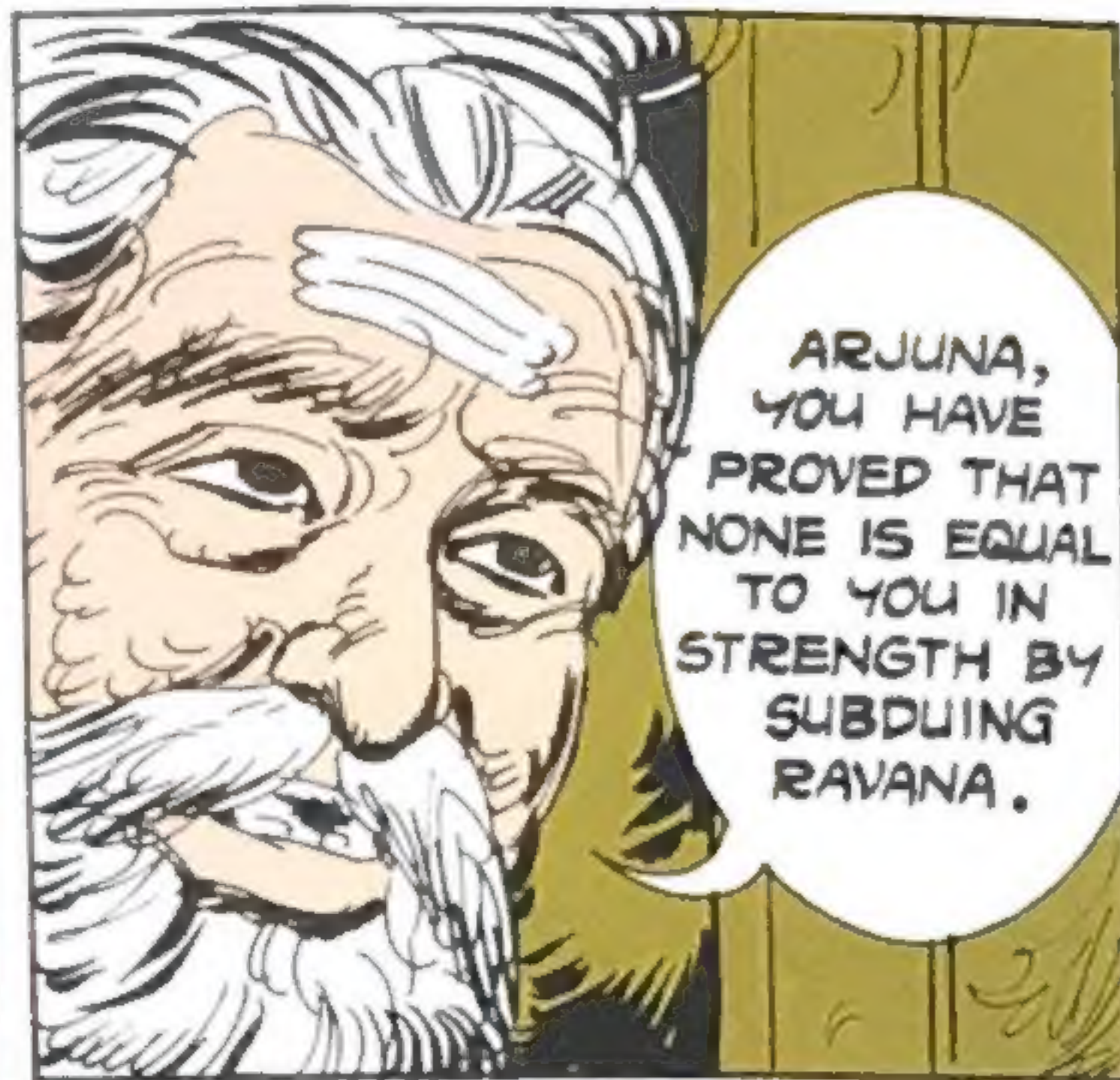


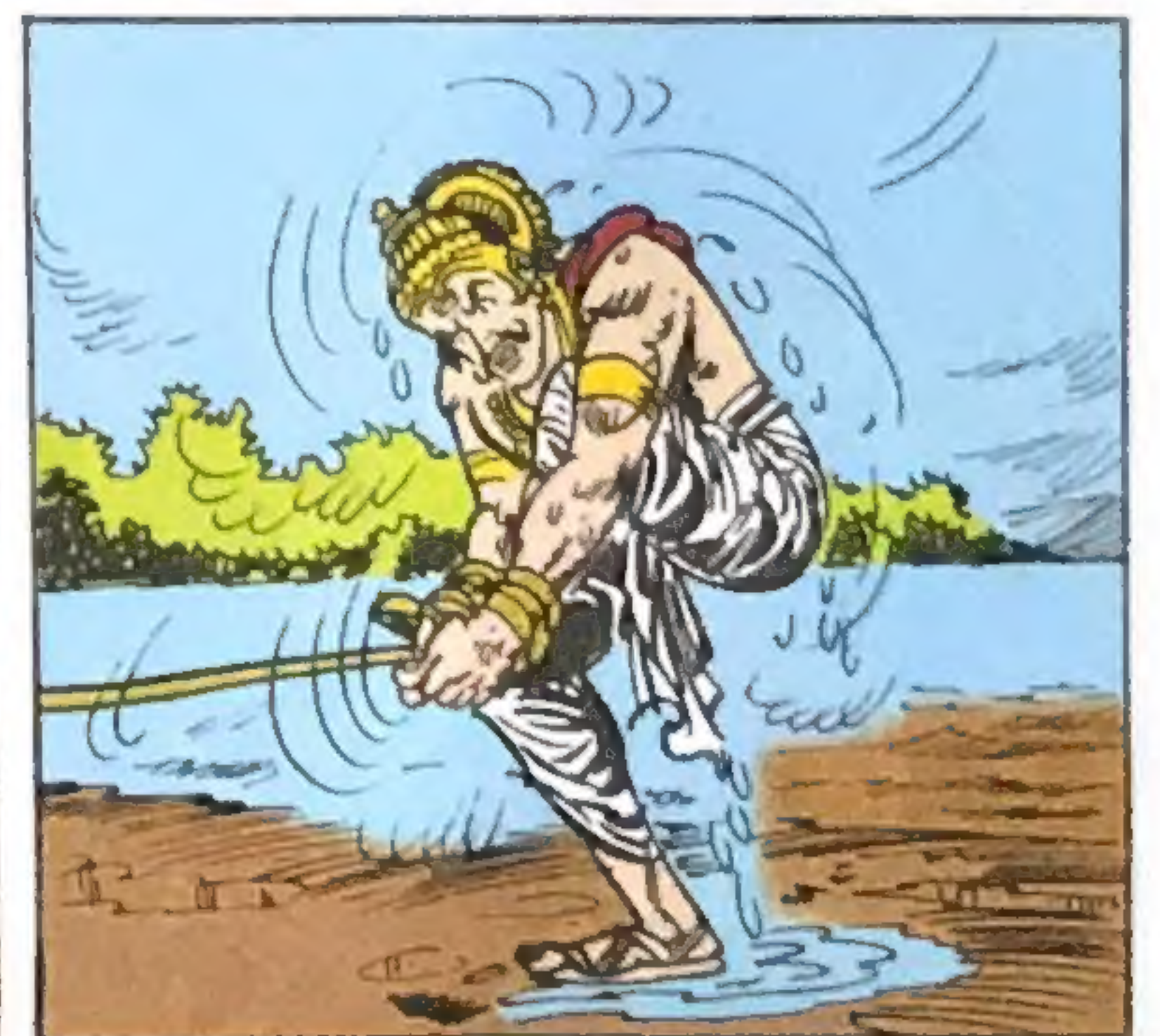
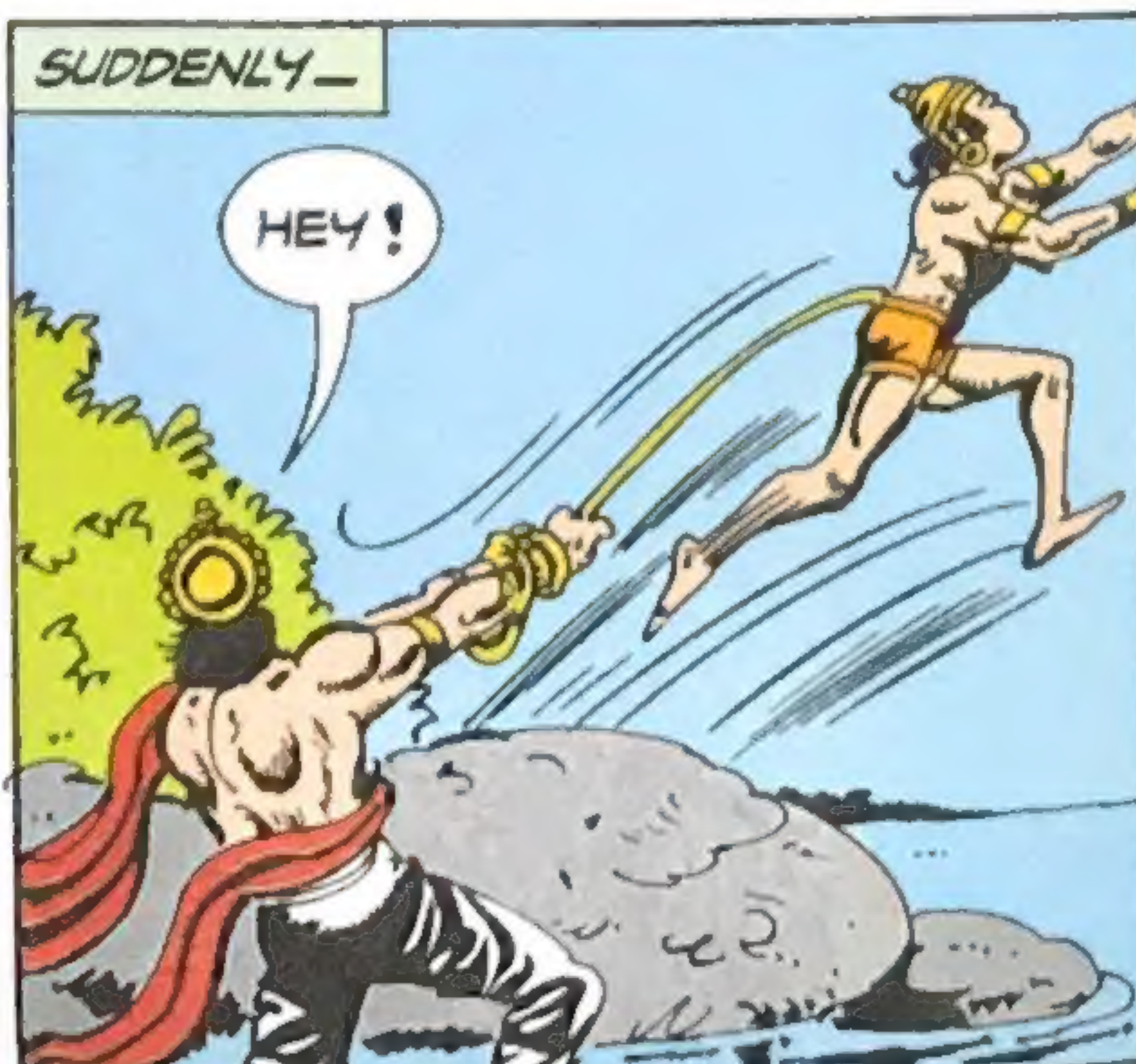
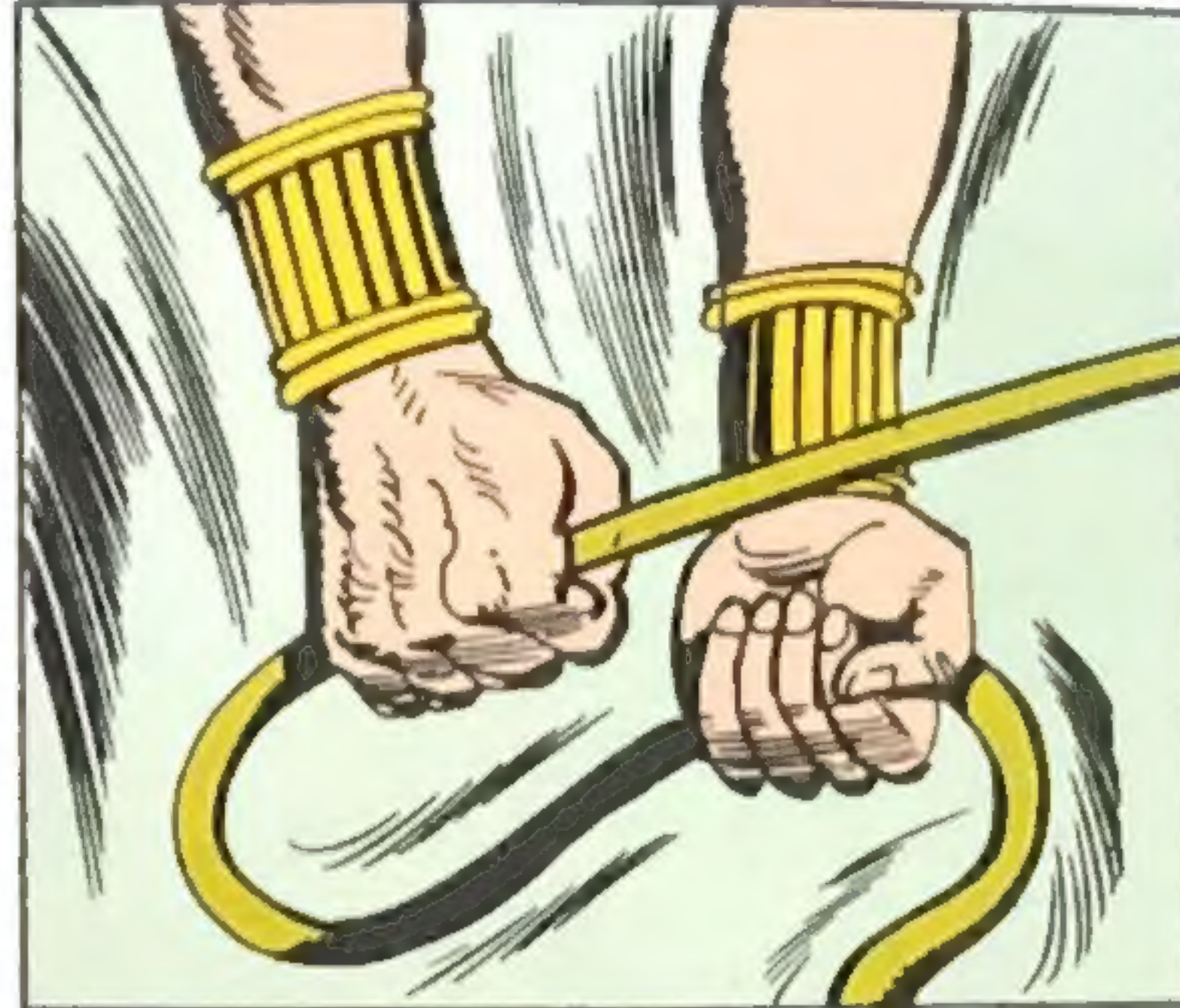
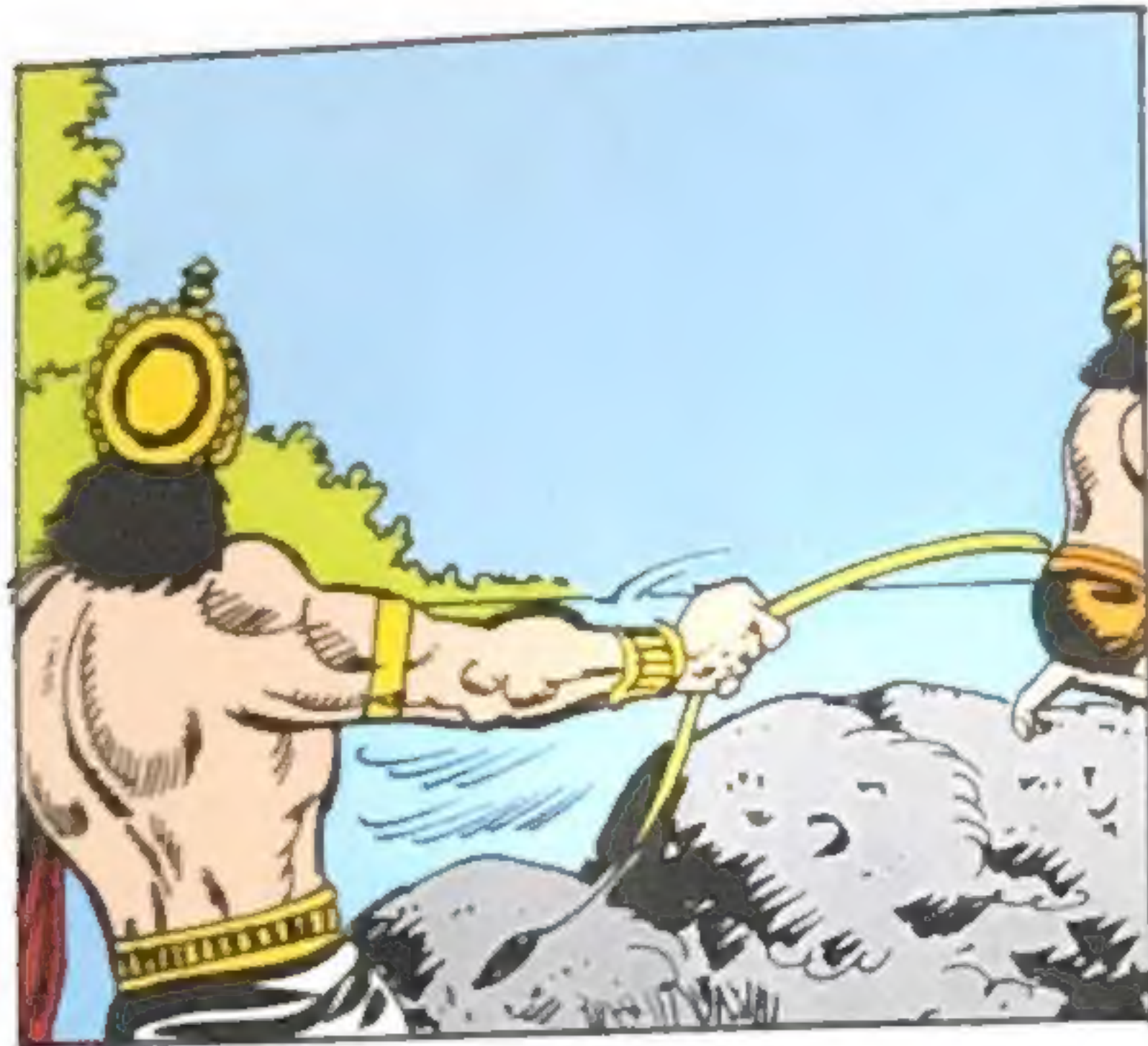
...TO THE GROUND.



WHEN RAVANA'S GRANDFATHER, THE SAGE PULASTYA, LEARNT THAT ARJUNA HAD TAKEN HIS GRANDSON PRISONER, HE CAME TO MAHISHMATI.

WELCOME, REVERED ONE!







VALI TOOK OFF AGAIN.

AFTER PRAYING IN THE HIMALAYAS HE CAME DOWN TO THE SOUTHERN SHORE...



...FOR THE LAST DIP...



...AND THE LAST ROUND OF PRAYERS.



I MUST FREE MYSELF BEFORE HE LEAPS OFF AGAIN!

USING ALL HIS MIGHT, RAVANA KICKED OUT WITH HIS ONLY FREE LEG.



BUT -



VALI TOOK OFF AGAIN.



THIS TIME HE WAS ON HIS WAY HOME TO KISHKINDHA.



